











# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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## GREATER INDIA\*

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE chief characteristic of the barbarous races is their narrow and severely restricted self-realisation. They have no chance to realise themselves in a wider sphere because the faint glimmer of their consciousness throws only a little light on the narrow limits of the immediate present and actual conditions. That is why and how they are weak in knowledge and in action. Our success is in exact proportion to our thought which is the very root of our creative energy and discipline : yādṛṣī bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādṛṣī, goes the Sanskrit adage. We are in need of thinking highly of our country and of ourselves for, otherwise, we do not get enough strength in our endeavours and so we land in futility with feeble hopes and feebler success. The effort to attain true greatness in our own light is the basic effort of the history of all civilized nations. The main objective of that effort is the liberation of our Self from the restricted limits of the background of Time and Space.

When I was a boy I saw the physical features of my country within very narrow limits, sitting on the window-sills of my tiny room. I could not catch a glimpse of that larger profile of my country in which she revealed herself in cosmic manifestation. There was nothing profound and comprehensive in the designation of my native city Calcutta which was practically the creation of foreign merchants. Because, in my infancy, I was too much of a prisoner in the corner of my room, I felt a very ardent desire to see, with my own eyes, that larger profile of the face of Mother India.

I was only eight or nine (1869-1870) when I stayed for a while in a garden house on the river Ganges and I felt

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great joy. The Ganges carries in her bosom the insignia of India's real greatness. In her sacred currents had commingled the history of the union of many lands, many ages and many minds. So India delivers a special message of self-revelation through the river Ganges which extends from the massive shoulders of the Himalayas to the far-off Eastern Ocean. She is hanging on the heart of India like a sacred-thread (yajñopavīta) linking up the memories of her centuries of penance in the cause of Wisdom and Religion.

Then, within a few years, my revered father took me up to the Himalayas with him. That was the first time when I saw my father and the Himalayas closely together, and I found in both a rare similarity in sentiment. The Himalayas represent the eternal form of India as a whole which is difficult of access and yet universal. In my father also that Indian wisdom became living which, in thought, in worship and in action, reached universality without any touch of petty provincialism.

In early life I began reading the so-called history of India. From day to day was inflicted upon me the torture of cramming the names and dates of the dismal chronicle of India's repeated defeats and humiliations in her political competition with foreigners from Alexander to Clive. In that historical desert of indignities, we tried desperately to satisfy our intense hunger for national glorification, out of the slender harvest of the oasis of Rajput Chivalry. It is known to all with what a feverish excitement we tried in those days to press into our service Todd's *Annals of Rājasthān* to enrich our Bengali poetry, drama and romance. That clearly showed how direly we had been starving in the process of discovering the true greatness of our country which was not a mere geographical expression but a vast continent of human aspirations and characters. The external nature of our country no doubt builds our body, but our character grows with the inspiration we derive from the world of human aspirations; and if we know that world to be petty and low then we earn no strength

to dispel our depression of spirit, merely by reading the history of the heroic nations that are foreigners.

While I was confined within the four walls of my room, I felt thirsty to catch a glimpse of the grandeur of the physical beauty of India. So while spending the days in the dark corners of the history of our national humiliation which was the then text-book of Indian history, I realized the pressing hunger for gaining some knowledge of the nobler history of India's moral greatness. In fact, it was that irrepressible hunger which drove my spirit then to seek satisfaction with stuffs that dreams are made of, sometimes charged with comic exaggeration and unsubstantiality ; and I cannot swear that the days of such vicarious gratification have gone for ever.

A planet shrinks and gets isolated the moment its light is quenched. The shrinking of spirit is the direct result of our being forced to get confined within ourselves. Within those narrow limits of shrinking, the planet probably goes on functioning every moment but it loses its seat of honour in the vast assemblage of heavenly luminaries, for it remains unknown, unsung, unidentified. The insult of its non-recognition is as grievous as imprisonment and the liberation therefrom can come only with re-illumination, or in other words, through some such manifestation of being which links it up with the universe, through some reality that is universally recognised.

He alone knows the reality who sees the universe in one's self and one's self in the universe—so say our Scriptures with repeated emphasis. The real state of our soul is not that of its imprisonment within the limits of its ego. This is a profound truth in the life of an individual, as well as in the spiritual life of a nation in history. The only real spiritual discipline ( tapasyā ) for a great nation is that of making itself familiar and friendly with the rest of the universe. But a nation that fails here is discarded by the Creator ; for it failed to find its place in the grand process of the creation of human civilisation. When Ramachandra was building the bridge ( between



India and Lanka ), then the humblest squirrel could find its work in that gigantic enterprise and even with its puny energy it proudly collaborated in reuniting the two shores by bridging over the ocean of separation. Thus the recovery of Sita from Ravana the demon of isolation came to be the symbol of man's spiritual strivings in this world. That Sita is Religion, Wisdom, Health and Prosperity—Sita the beautiful, Sita the well-wishing mother of Humanity. In the great work of recovering Sita the squirrel dedicated itself, instead of accumulating stores in its arboreal abode ; and that is why it received on its body the beautiful marks of blessing from the caressing hand of Rama, the Man-God. Those marks we should like to see on the body of every great nation ; for with those marks it takes its place in the world of Eternity, far above the narrow corner of its personal abode.

The message of India never lay imprisoned within the verses of the Upaniṣads. The noblest message that India has preached to humanity is that of sacrifice (tyāga) and suffering (duhkha) of soul (ātman) and fraternity (maitrī), but not of her army and armaments, of persecution and plunder. India abstained from disfiguring the pages of her history by printing impudently in bold black letters the anecdotes of brigandage.

Some Indians of yore may have earned glory by invading the land of other nations with the banner of world-conquest (digvijaya) unfurled. But, like other nations, India has not been turning the historical rosary piously remembering the conquering heroes. Merely powerful brigands were rarely remembered by our Indian Purāṇas (ancient chronicles).

He really destroys himself who takes to his ego as the be-all and end-all of his existence. Egoism is the very root of all sin and suffering and it can be liquidated only by the feeling of Maitrī (fraternity) towards the universe. That truth is the torch of our soul and India could not keep the radiance of Maitrī confined within her home-limits. India expressed herself through that radiance to many lands beyond her frontiers,

and that was the real characterisation of India. If in that light we could illumine our identity of today we shall be thrice blessed. We are born in that India which holds in her bosom the eternal message of spiritual freedom (*mukti*), the India of those great souls (*tapasyī*) who made the last sacrifice for freedom.

When a man is hungry he dreams of food. The hunger for political self-assertion is for many reasons the most powerful with us today and our dreams likewise have participated of the character of a political feast. So the voices of higher realities are shouted down and often rejected as irrelevant.

But if we follow the course of our modern political self-assertion we reach foreign history as its starting point. In that feverish political urge we had to imagine ourselves to be dream-made Mazzinis, Garibaldis and Washingtons. In our economic field also we were caught in the labyrinth of imaginary Bolshevism, Syndicalism or Socialism. These mirage-like manifestations are not natural products of the Indian field of all ages, but are fantasies born of our recent misfortune and hunger. As the film of this dream-cinema is being unrolled before our eyes, we catch, here and there, its trade-mark "Made in Europe" flashed in the corners, betraying thereby the address of the factory whence the film emanated.

When we thus ramble over unknown roads chasing unrealities, we lose our proper identity amidst sentimental distractions. But, as I have said before, our success can only be built on the true identification of our personality. If we could realise that over and above the sphere of politics and economics we have got a world of glory, then we may try to build therein our real future. But if, losing faith and disdaining the inner truth of our being, we go on building castles in the air, we shall just build futility.

The real wealth of India was never kept hidden, like an old deed in an iron safe. The only true expression of India was in all that she gave openly and freely. The surplus of her

cultural life, which she scattered everywhere, was the core of her personality. Through our capacity to give our real assets to others we earn the title to call the "outsider" our own. One who could smash the inner bonds of one's ego can easily transcend the cruel barriers of external geography. So if we want to know what the true wealth of India consisted of, we should traverse the oceanic barriers to reach the vast and far-off field of her self-dedication. Thus from India Abroad we may catch a glimpse of that eternal grace of India which we often fail to grasp, enveloped as we are today by the impure dust-storm of our modern history.

When I was in China I found the people there quite different from us. We have little similarity with the Chinese in nose or ears, language or manners. But I felt such a profound kinship with them as I felt with very few of our Indian folks. That kinship was not the result of political power or of conquest; the relationship between China and India was built not through infliction of suffering but through acceptance of sacrifice; and our two countries came to be united, for ever, through that Truth which enables us to feel those who are very distant and different to be very near and dear to us. The political history written by foreigners has avoided mentioning that Truth and so we lack courage to believe in it. But even today we have convincing evidences of that Truth scattered in many far-off places outside India. . . .

In the history of our middle ages, there was a religious conflict between the Hindus and the conquering Muslims. But we find also at that time a succession of saints and devotees—many Muslims were among that galaxy—who bridged that gulf of religious differences by means of the truth of personal relationship. They were not politicians and could not even dream of accepting, as a reality, the political union, so called, which was based on opportunism. They went to the very root where all mankind finds its common and unchanging basis of unity. They accepted, as their motto, that great truth which teaches us to see

*all as part of ourselves.* There were heroes of many battles whose name and fame have been recorded in our histories written on foreign model, and those heroes are now almost lost in the heap of dust which summarised their glories. But the deathless messages of those sages are still running in the life-blood of the Indian people. If we could draw our inspiration from that source we should see thereby an improvement in our politics and economics and also a strengthening in our general plan of action. Whenever our life is stirred to its depth by Truth, it succeeds in expressing energy in all departments. Then our life comes to be filled, as it were, with a 'creative ardour. This consciousness of the creative urge is the proof positive of the impact of Truth on our mind.

Buddhism is a monastic religion. But it initiated a prodigal creation of arts in the Vihāras, Chaityas and rock-cut temples, demonstrating a tremendous concentration of efforts. That is how we find that Buddhism, far from crippling man's nature, has awakened in it a sense of Truth reaching the very depth of his soul. That is how we find a colossal and glorious development of arts in every land outside India which the Indians have touched with the magic wand of Maitrī (fraternity). . . .

We humiliate Truth whenever we use it in self-glorification. May we never convert truth into a trumpet of personal or national vaingloriousness ! This is my earnest prayer—that we do not use truth as a mere costly ornament to dazzle the eyes of outsiders. May we seek and practise Truth out of the sheer need of our inner being !

On the eve of my departure for Java, I pray that my mind be free from all pride and be humble with the realisation of the immortal lesson of Truth. The grand message of Fraternity must dawn within us ; and then sanctuaries would rear their heads in the wilderness of our mind and showers of grace and beauty would make the desert smile ; and only that way we may be successful and triumphant in the supreme consecration of our life.

## THE NEW COMER

*By* RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE AGE waits expectant, New Comer,  
Gazing at your path.  
What message have you brought to this Earth.  
Life's stage  
Is set for some drama of yours :  
What great words will you offer  
For worship of man divine,  
The song of immortal realms ringing in your ears.

In the scabbard at your waist  
The great weapon lies hid  
For fight with evil.  
On this muddy road, flooded by sanguinary tide,  
Even here where hatred and divisions rule,  
A sanctuary of united hearts you may raise  
Building a bank of peace.

The unseen mark of victory on your brow—  
None knows in what quest is it gained ;  
To-day your name, still unwritten, we seek  
Like the star of coming dawn.  
The human child arrives, again and again,  
With eternal assurance  
That freedom is coming yet  
In the new morning light.

## TALES OF FOUR FRIENDS\*

### MY STORY.

SOMNATH has said that Love is both a mystery and a joke. We are all bound to admit that this is true to a certain extent ; because men grow poetic over love and laugh at it as well. Should the poetry be ethereal, should the jest be earthy, society objects to neither. Dante and Boccaccio were both writers of the same age ; not only that, but one was the master and the other his disciple. Don Juan and Epipsychidion were written by two poet-friends sitting side by side in the same room. You all know that these widely-divergent writers are equally admired in the literary world."

"This is the first time I hear that Byron and Shelley wrote those two poems sitting together at one and the same time," remarked Sen.

"If they didn't, then they should have," I replied.

However that may be, with the events you have narrated I could have composed three very humorous stories, which everybody would have enjoyed. Sen tried to realise in his life what he had read in poetry. Sitesh tried to poetise over what he had experienced in real life. And Somnath wanted to live a life shorn of all poetry. As a result, all three made equal fools of themselves. A certain Vaishnava poet has said that the path of life is slippery with love ; nevertheless nothing amuses people so much as to see somebody slip and fall on that path. But in trying to make a tragedy out of what is really a comedy, by mixing a few tears with it, you have made such a mess, that people may think there is something wrong about it. Because in the eye of society, man appears either in the sunlight or in the moonlight. The light in which you have seen your respective minds appear to-day, is this evening's pale and sickly light. The illusion of that light has now been dispelled ; so the story I am going to tell you has nothing ridiculous about it, whatever else there may be.

\* This is the fourth and last story of Pramatha Chaudhuri's Bengali novel, *Charyari Katha*, which has been translated into English for this journal by Indira Devi Chaudhurani. For previous stories see Parts III & IV. Vol. VIII.—*Ed.*

I needn't dilate upon my own personality by way of preface, because what I am about to relate is not my own love-story, but that of somebody else—a woman. And whatever else she may have been, that woman was neither a thief nor a lunatic.

Last June I was in Calcutta alone. You all know my house ; in that huge building only two people slept at night—my servant and myself. I had long been unaccustomed to living by myself, so I couldn't sleep well at night. The least sound gave me an uncanny sensation of somebody moving stealthily about the room ; and you know how many kinds of sounds one hears at night,—sometimes on the roof, sometimes in the doors and windows, sometimes in the street, and sometimes in the trees. One night these weird nocturnal sounds had kept me awake till one o'clock, after which I fell asleep, and dreamt that somebody was ringing me up on the telephone. I woke up at once and heard the clock strike two. The telephone kept on ringing. I jumped out of bed hastily. I thought perhaps something serious had suddenly happened to some relative or other of mine, so they were calling me up so late at night. Nervously going into the verandah, I found my servant lying fast asleep. Instead of waking him I took down the receiver myself, and putting it to my ear said : Hallo :—

For reply there was only the whizzing sound of the wires. Then after shouting Hallo ! hallo ! twice or thrice, a very soft and very sweet voice reached my ear. Do you know what the voice was like ?—When the tones of a church organ gradually die away, and one feels that the sound is coming from hundreds of miles off—just like that.

The voice became clearer and clearer. I heard somebody asking in English :

“Are you Mr. Roy ?”

“Yes, I am a Mr. Roy.”

“S. D. ?”

“Yes. Whom d'you want ?”

“It's you I want.”

From the pronunciation and tone of voice, I gathered that the speaker was an Englishwoman.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Can't you recognise me?"

"No."

"Listen carefully, and see whether you know my voice."

"I seem to have heard it before, but when and where I can't remember."

"Will you remember if I tell you my name?"

"Most probably I shall."

"I am Annie."

"Which Annie?"

"The one you used to know in England."

"I used to know many Annies in England. Most women there have that name."

"Do you remember you had taken two rooms in a house in Gordon Square?"

"Of course—I stayed there for two years at a stretch."

"Do you remember the last year?"

"Of course, it seems only the other day. I left England about ten years ago."

"Do you remember there was a servant-girl called Annie in the house that year?"

These words suddenly recalled all the memories of the past. Annie's image floated up vividly before my eyes.

"I remember now quite well," I said. "You were the prettiest servant-girl I ever saw in England."

"I know I was pretty, but I didn't know that you had ever noticed my good looks."

"How could you know? It would have been improper for me to tell you so."

"That's true. Between your social position and mine there was an impassable gulf."

To this I made no reply. Soon after she said :

"To-day I shall tell you something which you didn't know."



"What is that ?"

"I loved you."

"Really and truly ?"

"So truly that it has stood the test of ten long years."

"How could I know ?—You never told me so."

"It would have been improper for me to tell you. Besides, it can be guessed from one's appearance and behaviour. No woman at least confesses it openly."

"Strange, I never noticed anything."

"How could you ? Did you ever raise your eyes to my face ? Every morning when I arranged your table for at least half an hour, you either hid your face behind a newspaper, or filed your nails with bent head."

"You're right. That was because it would have been rude of me to stare at you. Of course I noticed now and again that you blushed when you came into my room, and seemed to get somewhat flurried ; but I put it down to nervousness."

"It was not nervousness, but shyness. However, it was extremely fortunate for me that you didn't observe anything."

"Why ?"

"Because if you had discovered my feelings, I would have felt too shy to come before you ; I would have run away from the house. Then I shouldn't have been able to see you day after day, nor do anything for you."

"What did you do for me ?"

"Did you ever feel the want of anything that year,—were you ever put to any inconvenience ?"

"No."

"That's because I served you with all my heart and soul. Do you know, nobody can serve you unless she is really fond of you ?"

"May I know why ?"

"Because you can't look after yourself, yet you never ask anyone to do anything for you."

"I never knew that you used to see to my comfort. I

thought it was Mrs. Smith. That's why, when I left I thanked Mrs. Smith, but said nothing to you."

"I didn't want your thanks. That you never scolded me, was enough reward for me."

"You don't mean to say so ! Does any gentleman ever scold a woman ?"

"Even if they never scold a woman, they often scold a servant-maid."

"Isn't a servant-maid a woman ?"

"Servant-maids know they're women, but gentlemen forget it daily."

This was so true, that I could say nothing in reply. After a little while she said.

"But one day you said something very cruel."

"To you ?"

"Not to me, but about me, to a friend of yours."

"I don't remember ever having said anything about you to any friend of mine."

"It meant so very little to you that it is not likely you should remember the incident ; but it has rankled in my mind like a thorn ever since."

"Perhaps I may remember, if you tell me."

"One day you bought a pearl pin, which was missing the next day."

"Possibly."

"I was hunting for it all over the place, when a friend of yours came to see you. You laughingly remarked to him that Annie had made a fool of herself in stealing the thing, because the pearl was false and the pin was gilt, so she would only get a penny if she wanted to sell it. Then you both laughed. But with that remark of yours you put that brass pin into my heart."

"We often make such unjust remarks thoughtlessly."

"Yes, I know ; that's why I wasn't angry with you—only deeply pained. On that day I realised in my heart of hearts how much worse the indignity of poverty is, than its actual

privations. How could you know that I never even stole a drop of your lavender ?”

“I have no excuse to offer. How often must I have unwittingly hurt other people’s feelings !”

“Later on I discovered who it was that had stolen your pearl pin.”

“And who was it ?”

“Your landlady, Mrs. Smith.”

“You don’t say so ! Why, she loved me like my own mother. She cried the day I left.”

“That’s because her bank failed. She used to charge you two shillings for every shillingworth of things.”

“D’you mean to say I was blind for so long ?”

“Your eyes don’t go beyond your own circle, so they don’t see the good or bad outside it. However that may be, I used to take something of yours without your permission,—books, which I returned after reading.”

“So you could read ?”

“You forget that we all learn to read and write in the Board Schools.”

“Yes, that’s true.”

“D’you know why I used to read on the sly ?”

“No.”

“God had given me beauty, which I used to tend carefully.”

“Yes, that I know. I never saw a servant-maid in England so neat and clean as you were.”

“What you didn’t know is this,—God had also given me a mind which I tried to cultivate carefully too ;—and both these things I did for your sake.”

“For my sake ?”

“Yes, I used to keep myself neat and clean, so that you shouldn’t turn up your nose at me ; and I used to read, in order to follow your conversation better.”

“But I never used to talk to you.”

"Not to me. But when you talked to your friends at table, I loved to hear you. It was not just ordinary language, but a display of fireworks. I listened in wonder, but couldn't follow it all, because the language you used was the language of books. It was to learn that English properly, that I used to read your books."

"Could you understand them?"

"I only read story-books. At first I found them difficult in parts, but once I got used to the style, I got on without a hitch."

"What kind of stories did you like best? Those which tell of thieves and brigands, fighting and murder?"

"No, those which tell of love. However, your servant-maid gained this much by loving you, that she became a lady in body and mind, as a result of which her subsequent life was so happy."

"I am glad to hear that."

"But at first I had to suffer a good deal."

"Why?"

"Don't you remember, when you left you said you would come back within a year?"

"That was only out of politeness, to console Mrs. Smith because she was so upset."

"But I believed what you said."

"I didn't know you were such a baby."

"My heart made a child of me. If I gave up all hope of seeing you again, there would have been nothing left to live for."

"Then what happened?"

"The very next day after you went away, I left Mrs. Smith's."

"Did she dismiss you without notice?"

"No, I left her without notice. I couldn't bear to stay another day in that desolate graveyard."

"Where did you go after that?"

"For a year I served in different lodgings where Indian students lived, in hopes of hearing of your return. But I couldn't stay anywhere for more than a month."

"Why? Because they were rude to you?"

"No, not because they were rude, but because they were too nice to me. None of them were indifferent to me, like you were. It was their special interest in me which I found so intolerable."

"I never knew before that sweet words could taste so bitter to any woman."

"I was no longer a servant-maid in mind, so I clearly perceived that the feeling behind their nice words was not at all nice. That's why I escaped all danger, in spite of my youth and beauty and poverty. Do you know what saved me?"

"No."

"I used to wear an amulet, by virtue of which no sin could touch me."

"Was it a cross?"

"It was a cross for me alone, not for anyone else. I hung round my neck with a black ribbon the sovereign you gave me as a tip. That gold coin on my breast was the outer symbol of the love within my heart. Never for a single moment did I part with it, though there were days when I had to go without food."

"Was there ever such a day, when you actually had to starve?"

"Not one such day, but many. When I was out of work, I had to starve whenever my pocket happened to be empty."

"Why, had you no father, mother, brother, sister, or any other relations?"

"No, I was brought up in a Foundling Hospital."

"How long had you to go through this suffering?"

"Not even a year. About ten months after you left I fell so ill that I had to go to hospital. It was there that I got rid of all this trouble."

"What was the matter with you ?"

"Consumption."

"But surely all illness makes one suffer ?"

"In the first stage of consumption, one feels no physical pain ; if anything, one feels brighter. So the months I spent in hospital were quite a happy time for me."

"This is the first time I hear that one can be happy, lying alone in a hospital with a deadly disease."

"In the beginning the patient has no fear of death. Then one feels that life will not be extinguished suddenly, but will burn lower and lower day by day, until it imperceptibly merges into darkness ; that death will be something like falling asleep. Besides as there is nothing to do in such a state of health, one can dream the whole day long ; and so I used to indulge in happy dreams."

"What did you dream of ?"

"Of you. I thought perhaps some day you would come to the hospital to see me. I expected you every day."

"Didn't you know there wasn't the slightest chance of that ?"

"Consumption makes one extraordinarily hopeful. However if you really had come, you would have been glad to see me."

"Glad to see you looking so ill ? What put such a strange idea into your head ?"

"What's the name of that Italian painter, whose pictures you liked so much that you hung them up all over your room ?"

"Botticelli ?"

"Yes. Well, if you'd come, you would have seen that I looked just like one of Botticelli's pictures. My hands and feet were long and slender ; my face was thin, my eyes were large, and the pupils as bright as they were limpid. My complexion was like ivory, and when I had fever my cheeks were tinged with red. I know I would have appeared very beautiful in your eyes."

"How long were you in hospital ?"

"Not very long. The doctor who treated me, discovered after a month that I hadn't got consumption exactly, but that my health had broken down through cold and hunger. Under his care and good treatment I recovered in three months."

"And then ?"

"Then when the time approached for me to be discharged, the doctor came and asked me what I intended to do on leaving hospital ?—"To be a housemaid," said I. He said, 'Since your constitution has once broken down, you will never again in your life be equal to such rough work.' "That can't be helped," said I. He suggested that if I was willing to become a hospital nurse, he would bear all the necessary expenses. His offer brought the tears to my eyes—for it was the first kind word ever spoken to me in my life. I accepted his offer. There was another reason for my consenting at once."

"What was that ?"

"I thought I would become a nurse and go to Calcutta. Then I would meet you again. When you were ill, I would nurse you."

"What made you think I should be ill ?"

"I'd heard that your country was very unhealthy, that everybody constantly fell ill."

"Then you really became a nurse ?"

"Yes. Then that doctor proposed marriage to me, and I put my life into his hands, as a token of my heartfelt gratitude."

"Are you happy in your married life ?"

"As happy as one can possibly be on earth. From my husband I got a social position, and infinite care and sincere affection. Never for a single day was he unkind to me in the least, never did he say a word that could hurt my feelings."

"And you ?"

"I believe I never caused him any unhappiness either, for a single moment. He wanted nothing from me, he only wanted

to love me and serve me. He treated me just as a father treats an invalid daughter. Even after my recovery, I never regained my former health, I remained all along like a picture by Botticelli, and my husband was old enough to be my father. I worshipped him like a god with all my heart and soul."

"I hope the shadow of my memory never fell across your married life?"

"Your memory kept my mind soft and tender."

"Then you didn't forget me?"

"No. That's what I came to tell you today. My feelings towards you remained the same as ever."

"You mean to say you loved both your husband and me at the same time?"

"Of course! There are many kinds of love, which can dwell together in human hearts without coming into conflict. For instance, people say that it is not only impossible but wrong to love one's enemies; but I have recently discovered that you can equally love and feel for all who suffer, be they friends or enemies."

"Where did you learn this truth?"

"In the battlefields of France."

"What took you there?"

"I'm coming to that. Both of us went to the French front during the war, my husband as a doctor and I as a nurse. It's from there that I've just come to tell you what I had no opportunity of saying before."

"I don't quite understand what you mean."

"There's nothing mysterious about it. About an hour ago your Botticelli picture was torn to pieces by a German shell,—and I came to you immediately."

"Then you are now—"

"In the next world."

After this I put down the telephone and returned to my room. In a moment I was overpowered by an unnatural drowsiness, and fell into a deep slumber as soon as I lay down.



When I opened my eyes next morning, I found it was past ten o' clock.

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On finishing my story I looked at my friends, and saw that the expression on Sitiesh' face was just like that of a child listening to a fairy-tale. Somnath's face was as hard as stone. I could see that he was repressing his feelings with effort. Sen's eyes were drooping, whether with sleep or emotion, it was difficult to say. Nobody said a word. Soon after the church clock in front struck twelve, and we all started up together and shouted "Boy ! Boy !"—but nobody answered. Going inside we found the servants sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall, fast asleep. We dragged them up, and sent them down to order our carriages.

Suddenly Sitiesh exclaimed : "Look here Roy, you are a writer ; you had better not publish these stories in the paper, or else I shan't be able to show my face in decent society." "I can't possibly resist the temptation to do so," I replied, "even if you fellows get annoyed with me." "I don't mind," said Sen. "What I've told you is absolutely true, but every one will think it's absolutely imaginary." Somnath said, "I have no objection either. What I've told you is absolutely imaginary, but every one will think it's absolutely true." I said, "I don't know myself whether what I've told you actually happened, or whether I only dreamt it. That's why I shall write down all these stories and publish them. In this world there are only two things which it is not permissible to tell—one is truth and the other untruth. That which is neither wholly true nor wholly untrue, but a mixture of both, can be told with impunity."

"It's all very well for you three," said Sitiesh. "One of you is a poet, another a philosopher, the third a literary man ;—so no one can make out what is true and what is false in what you say. But I am an ordinary creature, just like nine hundred and

ninety-nine men out of every thousand. Every reader will be able to judge by his own experience that my story is absolutely true."

"If your mind is just the same as other people's," said I, "then why should you be afraid to expose it to them?"

"Indeed, I like that," said Sitesh. "Even if most other people know in their heart of hearts that they are like me, nobody will care to admit it openly ; and I shall only become a laughing-stock."

Upon which Somnath said, "Look here Roy, this is what you must do. Pass off Sitesh's story as mine, and mine as Sitesh's." Frightened at this proposal Sitesh said, "No, no, let my own story be mine. Perhaps people may cut a joke or two at my expense, but if you saddle me with Somnath's sins, I shall have to leave the house !"

After this we all went to our respective homes.

## DARA SHIKUH AND FINE ARTS

By BIKRAMA JIT HASRAT

THE Mughal rulers were not only scholarly in habits but also possessed a very high aesthetic sense for the appreciation of Fine Arts. Notable calligraphists and painters formed a regular class in their court nobility, and most distinguished among them, often had a *manṣab* with pay. It was Akbar who introduced, in the sixteenth century, the Persian style of painting into India, and saw in the charms of pictorial art "a peculiar means of recognising God." His direct patronage and personal encouragement of Indian artists of religious traditional style and Muslim painters of the Persian school, resulted in the most remarkable synthesis in the realm of Fine Arts, and later on, led to the growth of the Indo-Persian Art. Abul Faḍl gives a list of more than one hundred calligraphers and painters of the sixteenth century ; among the latter, he adds, "seventeen are considered as masters of Art."<sup>1</sup> Of these, two are of outstanding nature—Khwāja 'Abdul Ṣamad *Shīrin-Qalam*, a native of Shīrāz and an accomplished calligrapher and painter, who attained the distinction of being enrolled to official nobility and later, became the Master of Mint and a Revenue Commissioner of a Province ; the other was a Hindu court painter and a great favourite of Akbar, named Daswanth, about whom Abul Faḍl observes, that "he surpassed all painters and ranked as first among the masters of the age."

During Akbar's time calligraphy was also studied as an art rather than a qualification of personal distinction ; and the

1. *Vide. A'in-i-Akbari*, (Blochmann, I, p. 77). The seventeen artists are :—(1) Mir Sayyid 'Ali, (2) Khwāja 'Abdul Ṣamad, (3) Farrukh Qalmāk, (4) Miskin, (5) Daswanth, (6) Basawan, (7) Keshu, (8) Lal, (9) Mukand, (10) Jagannāth, (11) Mādhu, (12) Mahegh, (13) Khemkaran, (14) Tārā, (15) Sānwala, (16) Haribans and (17) Rām. For details of their life, extant works which have survived and have been reproduced, vide *Johnson's Collection in the India Office* (87 Portfolios, arranged and catalogued) ; some reproductions are given in *the Court Painters of the Grand Mughals, A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon* etc.

court-calligraphers in the Imperial *Dār-ul-Insha* showed great skill in transcribing letters from the Emperor to foreign rulers and the *farmāns* and despatches to provincial governors. In the *Ā'in-i-Akbari* ('Institute xxxiv), Abul Faḍl enumerates eight calligraphical systems as current during the 16th century in Iran, Turkistan, India and Turkey.<sup>2</sup> Akbar introduced miniature-painting on paper, which developed from the practice of illustrating manuscripts of important historical or literary works. These were, afterwards, collected in the form of *Muraqqa's* or Albums and kept as books of illustration in the royal library or in private collections of Mughal princes and nobles.

Jahāngîr, Shāh Jahān, and even Aurangzed carried on the traditional patronage of both Indian and foreign artists. Indo-Muslim painting attained the highest achievement, both in style and character, during the reign of Shāh Jahān (A. D. 1627-1658) and the attenuation of its artistic grandeur is apparent in the well-known *Muraqqa'* of Dārā Shikūh now preserved in the India Office, completed in the year A. D. 1641-1642, which is described by Smith as "a most pathetic bit of wreckage from a princely library".<sup>3</sup>

Prince Dārā Shikūh, notwithstanding his preoccupation with the study of many religious systems, was a generous patron of arts and letters. His refined tastes and scholarly habits developed in him a fine aesthetic sense, which led to his appreciation of works of fine arts of calligraphy and painting. He was himself a noted calligraphist, and a pupil of the renowned master of his time, Āqā 'Abdur Rashīd Dailmī, a court-calligraphist of Shāh Jahān, who is described by the author of the *Tadhkirat-i-Khushnawīsān* as "the Prophet of the Realm of Calligraphic Art."<sup>4</sup> He could write both in the *Nasakh* and the *Nasta'liq*,

2. *Ibid.* Here also we find a critical discussion by Abul Faḍl of the Art of Writing and Painting.

3. Smith: *A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*. Oxford, 1911, p. 457.

4. 'Abdur Rashid Dalimī was a noted calligraphist, and the author of a valuable Persian Dictionary entitled *Muntakhīb-ul-Lughāt*, which he dedicated to Shāh Jahān. He was sister's son and pupil of Mīr 'Imād, after whose murder he migrated to India in the reign of Shāh Jahān. He became Dārā Shikūh's teacher and that of Zeb-ul-Nisā,

in a very graceful style in imitation of his teacher Āqā Rashīd. A strikingly charming painting in Mr. A. Ghosh's collection depicts him taking his lessons in calligraphy from the renowned master.<sup>5</sup> This picture abounds in fine illumination, rich ornamentation and luxurious colour scheme ; Dārā Shikūh is seen sitting in the first row with his illustrious teacher. If the historical accuracy of painting is established, we can conclude with justification, that he had received much benefit from the incomparable skill and unsurpassable ability of his teacher. *Ghulām 'Alī Haft-Qalam* pays a high tribute to the extraordinary penmanship of the prince and remarks, "In spite of his busy life as a prince and occupation with many sciences, few have written like him in imitation of the style of Āqā 'Abdur Rashīd."<sup>6</sup>

Many extant specimens of the calligraphy of Dārā Shikūh, preserved in various oriental libraries, show that he possessed a remarkably high degree of perfection both in the *Naskh* and *Nasta'liq* and a seldom surpassed grace and beauty in writing. M. Mahfūz-ul-Haq has collected thirteen specimens of his calligraphy.<sup>7</sup>

Dārā Shikūh's great skill in calligraphy aroused his interest

daughter of Aurangzeb. He died in A. H. 1081 ( A.D. 1670-71 ), according to the author of *Tārīkh-i-Muhammadi*, in A.H. 1085. For specimens of his works (painting and calligraphy), *Vide*. Martin's *Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey*. London, 1912, ( Plate, 201 ) and *Cat. of Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, Vol. IV. ( Plates XXVI & LIV ).

5. Reproduced in the *Calcutta Review*, March 1925.

6. *Tadhkira-i Khushnavisān*. *Id. Ind.* p. 54.

7. For details of these 18 specimens, *vide*. the *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*. Bib. Ind. 1929. p. 20-22 ; also the *Muslim Review*, Vol. II, No. 8, 1928. To these may be added a fourteenth specimen : that unique autograph MS. of the *Safinat-ul-Awliya*, transcribed by Dārā Shikūh, now in the private collection of Dewān Bahadur Bāja Narindra Nāth of Lahore. The date of its transcription is 1049 A. H., i.e. the year in which the work was completed. The MS. has been noticed in the *Punjab University Oriental College Magazine* ( May, 1934 ) and a photograph of the same has been obtained for the Arabic Section of the Punjab University Library.

The original MS. was lent by the owner to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore for 6 months for my use in our Department of Islamic Studies at Santiniketan.

Written in clear *Nasta'liq*, it contains 224 folios 10" × 6", with written surface about 6½" × 8½", lines 15 per page. It has been reshaped by the owner and minor alterations and additions have been made at several places. Illegible and incorrect words have been scraped and in their place ornamental flowers and decorations have been inserted. Of the first 9 pages only fragments have remained but the remaining portions have been beautifully preserved in a leather binding. The cover of the last folio, contains the names of a few persons from whose hands the MS. has passed. In addition, there are affixed 8 seals.

in the Art of painting. In Indo-Persian Art, calligraphy and miniature are like twin sisters, or better perhaps, as Huart observes,<sup>8</sup> the oriental miniature is a maid-servant of calligraphy. A great admirer of Indo-Iranian Art, he was also a connoisseur of the technique of the miniature ; and being catholic in spirit, refined in tastes, with no religious scruples to mar his appreciative sense, he became a good judge and an excellent collector of the pictorial art of the Mughals. He has expressed his views on the subject, in a Preface which he wrote for his renowned *Muraqqa'* now preserved in the India Office. So far as is known, only three copies of this Preface are now extant : one in the Bodleian Library, Oxford ; second in the private collection of Maulvī Abdul Haq of Aurangabād and the third incorporated in a MS. of the *Nigāristān-i-Munir*<sup>9</sup> in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris ( Blochet's *Catalogue*, No. 701 ). The text of the Preface has now been made available through the efforts of Dr. 'Abdullāh Chaghtā'i, who has examined the MS. of the *Nigāristān-i-Munir* in Paris.<sup>10</sup>

The *Dībācha* is written in ornate prose, interspersed with equally ornate verse. It opens with the praise of God, the Prophet and the four Caliphs. The *Muraqqa'* or Album for which the Preface is written is repeatedly styled as the *Kārnāma*. Here are some extracts from it :

"...And I have acquired the kingdom of Calligraphy (*khat*) and the connoisseurs of the Art have shown deference to it. I have tied down the

8. *Les Calligraphes et les Miniatures de l'Orient Musulman*. Paris, 1908.

9. The letters, notes and other writings of refined prose of Abul Barakāt Munir of Lahore ( d. 7th of Rajab A. H. 1054 ) collected by the author, are variously styled as *Inshā'i Munir*, *Munshāt-i-Munir* and *Ruqa'āt-i-Munir*, but this collection or at least a portion of it is entitled as *Nigāristān-i-Munir* by Rieu ( *Cat. of Pers. MSS.* Vol. III, p. 1048a ). In my opinion, as I have found in the available writings of Munir, this is not likely to contain Dārā Shikūh's Preface to his *Muraqqa'* ; the more likely place for it would be the *Bahār-i-Sakhun* by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Kambū of Lahore, as the Introduction to this collection written by Abul Barakāt Munir contains "certain official and private letters, the former written in the name of Shāh Jahān, 'Ālamgīr and other royal and princely personages" ( *Ethe* : 2090-92 ). It is, however, probable that the MS. entitled as *Nigāristān-i-Munir* in the Bibliotheque Nationale, might be a collection of Munir's writings including his Introduction to *Bahār-i-Sakhun*.

10. *Vide*, The Punjab University Oriental College Magazine, May, 1987.

hands of the masters of this Art and with folded hands (in humility) have carried on this work.

"This *Kārnāma* (Album ?) I have illustrated with my own luminous writing and this enlightened garden I have nurtured with the drops of my pen...

"And whereas, I, Dārā Shikūh, son of Shāh Jahān, with the aid of my pen have, for a considerable time, recreated the foundation-line (*khitta*) of Calligraphy (*khat*) and have remodelled it with my excellent pen-manship...

"By the name of the Creator. What a *Kārnāma* ! in which penmanship agrees gracefully with painting, where style of the latter is harmonious with that of the former. Its writing is the firmament of agreeability and its painting represent both form and spirit..."

And then he pays a tribute to his father Shāh Jahān, his grandeur, equity and love for Islam :

"The second Lord of the happy conjunction (*Ṣāhib-i-Qirān*)  
but the first Lord of the World,  
The king who shaped the form of the Faith to perfection.  
He was not the first *Ṣāhib-i-Qarān* (Timūr), but indeed  
The Painter's second effort surpasses his first !"

Of the Album, he speaks in very glowing terms :

"Before its Calligraphy (*khat*) the lines of water (*khat-i-āb*) are in shame and the circle round the Sun (*khat-i-āftāb*) stands discredited ; its paintings are set aright along with calligraphy like an ordinance of God and the latter, like the idol-worshippers, its heart enamoured of the former, invoke the protection of God. The loveliness of its pictorial Art is associated with the charm of the beauties, and the dot of its writing links itself with the mole of the sweet-heart :

#### *Fragment*

"By the Grace of God, this colourful *Muraqqa'*  
Attained perfection through the efforts of my pen.  
Its gracious view makes the eye tipsy, for  
Its lines are as intoxicating as those of the Cup of Jamshīd.  
Such is the charm of its pictorial Art, that  
The silver-bodied idols, out of shame, have fallen on the path of error.  
The men of vision look up to its writing for illumination  
For, the collyrium of evening brightens up the eyes of the stars.  
Its writing is superb like the down (*khat*) on the moon-faced cheeks :  
May the Time's page be ever illumined by it !"

Towards the end of the Preface, Dārā Shikūh speaks very harshly of the erroneous scribes—"the poets and men of letters often fall victim to the scoundrelly scribes, worst writers than whom there are none in any realm—"

The *Muraqqa'* of Dārā Shikūh contains 78 folios, besides many decorated fly-leaves. It has on each *fol.a.*, a miniature and on *fol.b.*, 30 signed specimens of calligraphy by masters of the art, the earliest being on *fol.62<sup>b</sup>*, dated A. H. 904 (A.D. 1498-99) at Herāt. The first *folio*. contains an impression of the seal of the *Kitābdār* of Emperor Aurangzeb, named Sayyid 'Alī al-Hussainī,<sup>11</sup> who styles himself as "a *murīd* of 'Ālamgīr", dated A.H. 1069. The beautiful transcription by Dārā Shikūh on *fol. 2<sup>a</sup>* is in the form of dedication, though on account of its being written on a splash of gold, the ink has lost its sheen. From the dedicatory note it is evident that the *Muraqqa'* was presented by Dārā Shikūh to his "nearest and dearest wife Lady Nādira Begum<sup>12</sup> in the year A.H. 1051 (A.D. 1641-42)." —

The *Muraqqa'* of Dārā Shikūh suggests a very close connection which exists between calligraphy and painting in the Indo-Persian Art. Essential harmony between the *Khaṭ* and the *Naqsh* is evident from the remarkable assimilative character of the both found in the works of the artists in the Mughal School of Painting; thus, many of the Albums in London Collections, notably in the British Museum, India Office and Victoria and Albert Museum (Indian Section) containing

11. Mir Sayyid 'Alī Khān al-Hussainī *Jawāhir-Raqam* of Tabrez, son of Āqā Muqīm, a renowned calligraphist. According to *Mir'āt-ul-Khayāl*, he came to India during Shāh Jahān's reign and entered his service. He was Aurangzeb's tutor and was later appointed superintendent of the Imperial Library. He died in 1094 A. H. in Deccan due to a malady of insanity. ( Vide. *Tadhkirat Khushnawisān* Bib. Ind. p. 57-58 ).

12. Nādira Bānu Begum, the daughter of his uncle Sultān Parvez, to whom the prince was married on Sunday, the 8th Jumāda I, A.H. 1042 ( *Dādshūhnāma*. Bib. Ind. Vol. I. p. 452 sq. ) and had two male issues from her—Sulaimān Shikūh and Sipahr Shikūh, both of whom shared the misfortune of their father and died in the prison fort of Gwāliār. According to Tavernier ( *Travels*, Vol. I. p. 350 ), Nādira Bānu Begum, accompanied her husband after his defeat at Samūgarh and perished of heat and thirst in the desert of Sind. The prince was so effected by the news that he fell as though he were dead.



miniatures include hundreds of specimens of calligraphy. Architectural frescoes in Indo-Persian style on various Mughal buildings invariably contain calligraphic decorations, chiefly in Persian or Arabic verse; and similarly, miniatures relevant to the subject of history or romance, illustrating manuscripts written chiefly in the *Nasta'liq* (with their total absence in the transcriptions of the Holy *Qur'ān*), form an outstanding decorative feature of the calligraphic works of art.

Among those whose signed specimens of calligraphy are included in the *Muraqqa'* are: Muhammad Šālih Qadīmī<sup>13</sup> (fol. 2<sup>b</sup>); 'Ali Kātib (fol. 20<sup>b</sup>); Mīr 'Ali al-Kātib<sup>14</sup> (fol. 21<sup>a</sup>); 'Abd al-Hussain? (fol. 27<sup>a</sup>); 'Abdur Rahīm '*Anbarīn-Raqam*<sup>15</sup> (fol. 28a) Muhammad Hussain *Zarrīn-Raqam* (fol. 29<sup>a</sup>) who styles himself as Jahāngīr Shāhi; Sulṭān Muhammad *Khandān*<sup>16</sup> (fol. 39<sup>b</sup>); Muhammad bin Ishāq Shahābī (fol. 38<sup>b</sup>); Muhammad (Hussain) al-Kāshmirī<sup>17</sup> (fol. 40<sup>b</sup>); Shāh 'Muhammad Kātib (fol. 60<sup>b</sup>); Zain-ud-Dīn Mahmūd Kātib<sup>18</sup> (fol. 62<sup>b</sup>); Muhammad Hussain *Zarrīn-Raqam* Akbar Shāhi (fol. 68); and Sulṭān Muhammad<sup>19</sup> (fol. 77<sup>a</sup>).

13. Mīr Muḥammad Šālih son of Mīr Muḥammad 'Abdullāh *Mushkin-Raqam* was a poet and a renowned calligraphist in the *Nasta'liq* style. According to '*Amal-i-Šālih*' of Muḥammad Šālih Kaubū (wr. A. H. 1070), he had a double pen name—*Kushfi* in Persian and *Subhānī* in Hindi. He died in A. H. 1061. ( Vide. *Tadhkira'i Khushnavīsān*, Bib. Ind. p. 101. )

14. Mīr 'Ali al-Kātib of Herāt, son of Mahmūd Rāfiqī and a learned pupil of Sulṭān 'Ali. *Tadhkira'i-Shamā'i-Anjuman* describes him a contemporary of Jāmī. He was also a poet with the *nom de plume* of *Majnun*. In Bukhārā, he was associated with 'Abdullāh Khān Uzbek. *Tadhkira'i Khushnavīsān* (opt. cit.) states that he inscribed his name with the specimens of his calligraphy in the famous *Muraqqa'* of Jahāngīr. He also wrote a treatise on the Principles of Calligraphy for prince Sulṭān Mahmūd Muzaḥḥar. He died in A. H. 950.

15. Most probably Mirza 'Abdur Rahīm Khānkhānān, son of Bairam Khān, who is described as one "who possessed a great skill in the calligraphic art." He was born in A. H. 964 and died in A. H. 1036. Another calligrapher of this name was a pupil of Āqā 'Abdul Rashīd. ( *Tadhkira'i Khushnavīsān*, p. 56. )

16. Sulṭān Muḥammad Khandān, a pupil of Maulāna Aghar who himself was a pupil of Mīr 'Ali Tabrezi. He lived during the reign of Amīr Timūr.

17. Muḥammad (Hussain) al-Kāshmirī was an Indian *Nasta'liq* writer, whom Akbar gave the title of *Zarrīn-Raqam* (*Zīn- Akbarī*, p. 115). Abul Faḍl also calls him *Jādū-Raqam* and *Zarrīn-Qalam*. He was a pupil of Maulāna 'Abdul 'Azīz and died in 1020 A. H.

18. Zain-ud-Dīn ( Muḥmūd ) a pupil of Muḥammad 'Arīf Yāqūt. Another calligrapher of this name is Maulāna Zain-ud-Dīn Nishāpuri, a pupil of Maulāna Sulṭān 'Ali Mashhadi.

19. Sulṭān Muḥammad ( Nūr ? ) a contemporary of Sulṭān Muḥammad Khandān ( *supra* ).

The last *folio*, again, contains an impression of the seal of Sayyid 'Ali al-Hussaini, *Kitābdār* of 'Alamgīr, dated A. H. 1069.

The *Muraqqa'* of Dārā Shikūh contains about 40 miniatures. Some of these are remarkable specimens of Indo-Persian Art ; e. g. :

Fol. 8. *Brown Bird*, anonymous, reproduced by Smith ( Plate cxx ) with the description : "A charming bird study—long-legged brown bird standing by the side of a pool, fringed with grass, flowers and bomboos in tolerably good perspective. The blue sky unfortunately is rather crude."<sup>20</sup>

Fol. 10. *Wild Duck*, anonymous, reproduced by Smith ( Plate cxxi ), "representing a wild duck standing by the side of a pool at the foot of a hillock. Sunlight is boldly indicated by a wash of gold with a surprisingly fine effect."<sup>21</sup>

Fols. 11 & 12. *An old Faqīr in Two Positions*,<sup>22</sup> holding a book in one hand, and a rosary in the other. The outline of the figure is drawn with the usual sharpness and shading with fine lines is employed sufficiently to give an impression of roundness. Subdued colouring.

Fols. 17<sup>b</sup>, 18, 19<sup>b</sup>, 33<sup>b</sup>, 35<sup>b</sup> & 45<sup>b</sup>. *Six Portraits of Prince Salīm*, by anonymous artists. That on fol. 18, is of exquisite beauty, rich in colour and scheme. It shows the young prince Salīm ( Jahāngīr ) sitting at his knees on a luxurious carpet before a saint, who is holding a book in his hands. In the background is a lake, beyond which are visible domes of village hamlets. Above stands a gold, blue and yellow sky of infinite beauty, with a few larks hovering by in the distant horizon.<sup>23</sup>

Fol. 21. *A Sāqī in Iranian Robes Filling a Cub of Wine*, with this transcription : Muhammad Khan *Muṣawwar*, A. H. 1043.

20. *A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1911, p. 476.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Reproduced by Binyon : Plate XXXI. ( *The Court Painters of the Grand Mughals* ).

23. Smith. *opt. vit.* Plate CXXIX.

Fol. 37<sup>a</sup> . *A Prince and a Darvesh.*

Fol. 41<sup>a</sup> & 41<sup>b</sup> . *Landscape.*

Fol. 48<sup>a</sup> . *Portrait of an Amir.*

Fol. 45. *A Lady Under a Blossoming Tree.*

Fol. 42<sup>b</sup> & 43. *Two Wood Engravings*, one of S. Caterina di Siena dated 1585 A. D., and the other of S. Margarita of about the same period.

Fol. 60. *Reading the Qur'ān*, by an anonymous artist. A Mullah is reading the *Qur'ān* which is placed on a stand ; two pupils are listening attentively while a third is performing ablutions.

Fol. 71<sup>b</sup> & 72<sup>b</sup> . *Two Bird Studies.*

Fol. 74. *A Lady with a Gentleman in European Costume.*

The style of some of the miniatures enumerated above, varies according to the theme, but in all other respects,—richness of colour, brilliancy of outline and sharpness of tone, nearly all pictures represent the salient features of Indo-Persian Art. Some paintings show a not too insignificant influence of European Art ; two wood engravings (*fol.42<sup>a</sup>* and *43*) and another picture (*fol.74*) deal with Christian subjects ; while the charming delineations of bird life are in pure Persian style, with perhaps a superb but undefinable Indian touch. The landscapes are all in Indo-Persian conception, while some show a high degree of synthesis between Indian traditional art and Persian technique. The *Sāqī* and nearly all the portraits of Prince Salim are purely Persian both in colour and scheme.

The *Muraqqa'* of Dara Shikūh, which is now preserved in the India Office, is a rare combination of style and subject. It contains representative specimens both of calligraphic and pictorial Art beginning from Akbar's time till the end of Shah Jahan's reign, compiled and arranged by the Prince himself—a fact which bears a remarkable testimony to his high artistic taste and appreciative sense. Nearly all critics are unanimous about its value as a rare collection of works of Indo-Persian Art ; though one remarks, that "very few pictures show any

strength," while another observes, that "they may have been chosen for the femininity of their character, as the volume formed a present to a lady." It is in this respect that a pathetic and intense human interest surrounds the *Album*, as it was a gift from a loving husband to a devoted wife. Apart from this halo of romance and tragedy, the *Muraqqa'* to a student of Indo-Iranian Art presents a brilliant panorama of the remarkable achievement of the Mughals in the patronage of Art and Calligraphy. "What *Koh-i-Nūr* is to other eastern diamonds," remarks Cecil L. Burns,<sup>24</sup> "surely the richly bound volume in wrought leather, containing minatures of Persian, Central Asian and Mughal artists, and specimens of calligraphy of the highest quality of the penmen's and painters' art, must be to any other volumes of similar character.... The Album is similar to such an one as Vasaris, the great biographer of the Renaissance in Italy, prepared of the drawings of the artists of that period... All are of the highest quality, of the schools represented, and afford a striking testimony to the knowledge of the Prince who selected them."

24. Quoted from the *Times of India Annual*, 1926, by M. Mahfūz-ul-Ḥaq in the *Muslim Review*, Vol. II. No. 8., 1928.

## SNAPPED CHAIN

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

WITH the piece of a snapped chain  
    ringed round your legs, O bird,  
    fly away, fly alone.

The pain will cling to your feet,  
    but the joy will dance in your wings,  
    when you soar with derelict clouds.

Freedom is in pain which is pure  
    which is in harmony with the boundless,  
    in which the shame of self-deceit is destroyed,  
    and which leaves to the dust the cage  
        of the living death of vain longing.

*Translation by the author.*

## THE BOAT "PADMA"

*By* RATHINDRANATH TAGORE

FATHER loved the river Padma, as most of his readers know from the poems he has written in praise of its grandeur and beauty. It is no wonder that he named his favourite houseboat after this river. Although it was he who first gave it a name the houseboat can claim an older association with our family. It was most certainly built by Prince Dwarkanath and remained moored on the banks of the Hooghly near Calcutta during his life-time and that of my grand-father Maharshi Devendranath. It is more than likely that the message of the death of the Prince was brought by fast couriers to the Maharshi while he was on a pleasure cruise on this very boat. We have also on record that my grandfather travelled up and down the Ganges on this houseboat, often as far up as Benares, and that one of these trips was taken during the troublesome days of the Mutiny.

Before the age of steam engines the rivers, rather than the roads, were the natural means of communication in our country, specially in Bengal. The well-to-do had to keep a fleet of river craft of all kinds for their use, and of them houseboats with comfortably furnished cabins formed an essential part. They were used mostly for long-distance journeys but also often for pleasure cruises. The boats were of peculiar construction, only to be found in Bengal. With a wide beam affording ample accommodation and flat-bottomed they were heavy and slow of movement but well-suited to negotiate the shallow and uncertain rivers of this province. Dacca made a business of building these boats, which are therefore commonly known as "Daccai bajrahs". Zemindars used to take great pride in them and vied with each other in their construction, though today they have no more use for them and rarely are they to be seen now. If at present our houseboat, which has been carefully

preserved all these years, is seen anywhere, crowds of villagers on both the banks gape at it as at a curiosity.

This boat PADMA was cherished by father as one of his most prized possessions. During his youth when he was completely absorbed in his own self and his own creative work and avoided society the boat gave him the solitude that he needed. When my grandfather asked him to take over the management of the family estates, father was glad because it afforded him greater opportunities of spending his time on the boat, travelling on inspection from one district to another and even outside the province to villages in Orissa. Nothing could have been more congenial to him and he made good use of the boat until his middle age when other interests took him away to entirely different surroundings. He was thereafter obliged to stay at Santiniketan ; the institution he had founded there claimed all his attention. During the first few years of his stay there it was not unusual for him to leave his work suddenly and go off to Shelidah and the boat. His letters show what an amount of solace he derived from these holidays, snatched from a life full of worries and anxieties at Santiniketan and in Calcutta.

That the two phases of his life—the solitary artist and recluse of the youthful years, trying to probe into the depths of his being to find the talisman that will touch with magic and give a meaning to all his creative efforts, and the mature man living a life of multifarious activities, sharing his thoughts and work with his fellow-beings—should be associated with two entirely different surroundings is significant. But there is no doubt that his first and deepest love was for the country of mellow green fields with their clusters of bamboo shoots swaying gently with the south breeze and hiding villages in their midst, of majestic rivers with their stretches of gleaming white sand—the haunts of myriads of wild ducks, as well as of homely rivulets with sweet-sounding names, meandering in and out through peaceful villages hugging their banks. Such associations had entered deeper into his life than the parched and barren wastes

that surrounded him at Santiniketan, the choice of his later years. The river Padma and its sandbanks, Shelidah and its fishermen and minstrels and its fields of golden yellow mustard blossoms, the houseboat with its plucky boatman Tapsi and its white-bearded cook Phatik must have haunted him in his old age and made him feel homesick for all that he missed at Santiniketan.

In spite of mothers's fears, father started taking me with him on his frequent river journeys when I was little more than a boy of seven. And the last time I travelled with him on the houseboat was in 1909 when on my reaching the age of twenty-one father thought that I was grown up enough to take charge of the management and he took me out on a tour of the estates to initiate me into the mysteries of account books and to introduce me to the tenants. I have therefore some knowledge of how he lived on the boat when he used to retire to this favourite retreat of his. I have also shared with him there many an adventure and interesting experience. One such incident I have already described elsewhere. Others may be related later on. But now I am mainly concerned with the houseboat and its association with the literary life of my father.

The headquarters of the three estates at Shelidah, Shajahadpur and Patisar and the factory at Kushtia, connected as they are by navigable rivers, gave my father sufficient excuse to adopt a roving life on a boat. My earliest recollection is that of a visit to Kushtia. The station which hangs precariously over the steep embankment of the Gorai and its one-legged English station master, the river with its swift current and eddies, the innumerable barges and dinghies huddled close to the bank—all seemed strange and forbidding to me. But once we stepped into our boat the homelike cosy interior comforted me. After a frugal meal consisting mainly of *bilsa* fish, father at once settled down to write while I watched with the intent curiosity of a child the restless movements of the innumerable insects that kept hovering over the water and the thousand and one interesting sights to be observed on the riverside of a busy locality. The



factory was inspected in due course—its workshop with its huge hydraulic presses for baling jute, innumerable sugarcane crushers waiting for shipment to interior villages, its ware-houses bulging with their loads of mustard and other oil seeds and the hundreds of workmen sweating and shouting. Father looked into all the details of the business but it did not take him long to do it ; he had a way of easily shaking off the officers who came with long reports and accounts. Business finished he would immediately go back to his writing as though the interruption mattered not at all. Only after sunset would he allow himself any rest. He would then take me with him to sit on the deck. Of what he talked to me, I have, of course, no recollection now. But most often we would sit quietly and watch the fishing boats glide silently along the current, silhouetted against the soft glow of the sunset colours until the stars came out one by one and the night advanced with stealthy steps enveloping everything with mystery. The venerable Phatik would then appear and break the silence with his stentorian voice announcing dinner—a ceaseless monotony of chicken cutlets and bread pudding. My eyes would get heavy even before the last morsels had been gulped down but father would sit till late reading or writing. He always carried a library of books with him. I can recollect treatises on ethnology, anthropology and other sciences, comparative grammars of the Indo-Aryan languages, sanskrit classics and books of travels, but hardly ever any light literature either in Bengali or English. There might have been also the latest books on the history of English Literature and Criticism and translations from French and Russian literature.

When he arrived at any of the estate headquarters the routine would not be much altered except that the mornings would be given over to conferences with the officers and the hearing of endless applications from tenants. The tenants knew that father never denied audience to any of them, however trivial their business, with him, and that no officer dared interfere with this privilege of theirs. What with the firing of

guns by quaintly dressed guards and the blowing of conch shells by veiled women the arrival at any of these places was somewhat spectacular and reminded one of the Middle Ages. If the visit happened to coincide with the *Punyaha* day a procession would be formed and father would be taken seated in a palanquin to the office building, in front of which a *shamiana* would be put up to shelter the crowd gathered for the occasion. The zemindar on such occasions has to sit on a raised platform so that everybody can see him. After some ceremonials the tenants one by one—the elders and the headmen of the villages first and then the commoners—would be conducted to him, the *nazarana* ( payment of the first instalment of rent, generally a token payment only ) paid, and blessings received with bowed heads. While this quaint ceremony was going on preparations would be hurried for the feast which followed. The tenants themselves made all the arrangements and saw to it that the precedents which social etiquette demanded were strictly followed. Since several thousands had to be served, the fare was very simple, consisting mainly of parched rice and sour milk. It was a pleasure to see the enjoyment they derived from such a feast.

During the winter months the houseboat would be taken to some remote bank of the Padma or to an island where the freshly formed sand dunes stretched for miles, far from any human habitation. A few weeks of absolute solitude and communion with nature is what father enjoyed most in those days. He would leave instructions that nobody was to disturb him and very often he spoke not a word with any one for weeks together. Only on occasions would he take the whole family with him. Two or three other houseboats would then be requisitioned and a regular camp of bamboo sheds erected at the mooring place. During such excursions friends would also be invited, Sir Jagadish Bose being the most frequent visitor. As soon as the news arrived of his intended visit Tapsi would get busy baiting turtles, for Sir Jagadish had a particular

weakness for this delicacy. I always looked forward to his arrival. I knew that every morning he would take me along with him in trailing the footprints of the turtles to their nests. These animals have the habit of walking long distances away from the edge of the water to lay their eggs in dry sand pits. They cover the eggs carefully afterwards so that jackals cannot get at them. But unfortunately their trail of footprints on the sand betrays their secret to the more cunning man. We got to be experts in locating these haunts and could tell the different species by the size and shape of the eggs. We made a funny pair indeed, the lanky boy trotting along the world famous scientist, scouring the sand dunes and casuarina jungles for turtles' eggs! These, by the way, made excellent omelettes and amply compensated for our trouble. Sir Jagadish had another hobby. He would make all of us dig pits in the sand and with wet towels on the head lie down in them for sand-bathing, and then when the roasting process had gone far enough jump into the ice-cold water for a change.

During the days Sir Jagadish would be with him father had perforce to lay down his pen. The scientist had a wonderful way of keeping everybody entertained by his talk and an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes gathered from a wide knowledge of the world and its affairs. And he would not go back without having listened to all the new poems and stories father had written since his last visit. He made father read over and over again the pieces that caught his fancy. In the evenings after dinner we would all get on board an open row-boat and keep it anchored in mid-stream. Sir Jagadish would not be content until he had heard father sing a score of his favourite songs. And of these the most favoured was *बसु है फिरे एस*.

I happen specially to remember one memorable night when father and Amala Devi, the sister of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, kept on singing till after midnight. The songs had been newly composed, particularly to suit the voice of Amala Devi. As nobody wanted to go to sleep after the

wonderful music the rest of the night was spent in wandering around the moonlit sands. Sandy wastes can be very deceptive in moonlight, and it gave the party much amusement to be plunged without warning into knee-deep water when least expecting it or to find to their chagrin solid dry ground after taking good precaution to roll up their dresses for wading through a pool. It is also very easy to lose one's directions in these *chars*.

The river Padma is so broad, the currents are so dangerous and sudden, the storms strike it with such fury that risky adventures are not rare with those who live on its bank. Father had his full share of them. He was a good swimmer. I have seen him swim across the Gorai with ease. He taught me how to swim by throwing me one day into the river from the deck of the boat. It was unnecessary to repeat the lesson the next day. Father enjoyed taking risks where others would hesitate. Many a time the old manager at Shelidah would come with folded palms beseeching him not to sail across the Padma in bad weather. But once father had made up his mind it was useless to try and dissuade him. When, however, it concerned the safety of others he would easily get nervous and fret. Once I had gone across the Padma to see the *Vijaya* festival at Pabna. It was worth a visit. Hundreds of boats gathered for the occasion on the ghats would be beautifully illuminated and a most exciting boat-race used to take place (as in most of the river ports of East Bengal in those days) on this the last night of the Durga Puja. In the excitement of watching this interesting sport we delayed longer than we should have and stormy weather made the crossing difficult. When at about two in the morning we sighted the landing at Shelidah I noticed to my consternation father waiting at the ghat with a lantern. He hurried away without meeting me and did not so much as utter a word of reproach or anger the next day. His silence on such occasions was more terrifying—as many others besides me will testify—than a thriashing.

It is not easy for me to say which are the poems and songs father had composed or the stories and essays he had written while living on the houseboat PADMA. Perhaps some day an industrious student of his literature will find out and give us this information. It may, however, be safely conjectured that a major portion of his literary productions upto the beginning of the century was written on this boat. It was while cruising leisurely through the many rivers of Nadia, Faridpur, Pabna and Rajshahi that his keen sense of observation gave him the deep and intimate understanding of the life and landscape of rural Bengal which permeates all his writings.

The boat PADMA has served my father well. It gave him peace and shelter when the world harassed him. It gave adventure when he needed it. It took him into the heart of the country and gave him materials for his writing. And above all it gave him abundant pleasure.

## REFERENCES TO WALL-PAINTING IN THE EARLY BUDDHIST LITERATURE

*By* JIBENDRA KUMAR GUHA

THAT the earliest wall-paintings in India, dating back to the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, depict scenes connected with the propagandist aspects of the Buddhism which followed in close heels Aśoka's zeal to turn it into a world religion, is now an admitted fact.

There are scenes in caves IX and X (these are the caves which contain the earliest Indian wall-paintings now extant) where we find the Buddha among his non-Aryan followers. The treatment bespeaks of an established art—an art which had long ago forsaken its experimental stage. It can naturally be presumed that there had passed into oblivion a period in which this art was in the making. There being no corroborative date to substantiate this hypothesis, it remains only an assumption.

So far as the culture of any nation is concerned her art and literature are correlated. What was the condition of the early Buddhist art as reflected in her oldest literature?

Copious are the references to the prevalence of wall-painting in the early Buddhist literature, for instance, that which flourished in the first three or four centuries preceding the Christian era.

Numerous references in the Vinaya, the various Nikāyas, the Jātakas, the Therīgāthās and other allied books make it clear that at least the upper intelligentsia had the walls of their domiciles painted by artists.

Vinaya : Cullavagga says, "Now at that time the Chabbaggiya Bhikkhus had imaginative drawings (paṭibhānacittam), painted on the Vihāras—figures of men and figures of women."<sup>1</sup>

1. Cullavagga, VI Khandhaka, 8, i and ii, Translation by T. W. Rhys Davids, S. B. E. vol. XX pp. 170—178.

Majjhima Nikāya: "It is like a man who comes with lac ( lākhaṃ ) and ( colours ) yellow ( haliddaṃ ), blue ( nilaṃ ), or madder ( mañjitṭhaṃ ) to paint pictures."<sup>2</sup>

Jātaka : Twice in the Mahāunmmagga Jātaka,<sup>8</sup> which is a compendium of several Jātakas, references to wall-painting in connection with a hall and a tunnel are obtained.

In the Sutta Vibhaṅga (II, 298) a picture gallery (cittāgāra) belonging to king Pasenadi of Kosala is mentioned.

In the Therīgāthā<sup>4</sup> Subha at Therī residing at Jīvaka's mango-grove mentions wall-painting (bhitticitra) executed in ochre (haritāla) as an example of the unreal.

These passages quoted from the early Buddhist texts testify to the prevalence of wall-painting in that age. There are of course more precise and comprehensive references to painting in several post-Christian books, for instance, in the Aṭṭhaśālīnī of Aśvaghoṣa. My focus being concentrated mainly on pre-Christian sources, these naturally remain outside my scope.

TECHNIQUE : We have seen that the earliest wall-paintings now extant in India are almost exclusively Buddhist. But in spite of its Buddhist predominance, we are not in possession of any treatise by Buddhist artists or writers which deals exclusively with painting or allied arts. The earliest, most comprehensive and famous book dealing with painting in Ancient India, is the Viṣṇudharmottaram coming from the Brahmanical sources. Other allied books, for instance, Mānasāra, Silparatna, etc., have also Brāhmanical origin. Why this difference? We can offer only a tentative hypothesis. The Buddhist Church did not approve of the practice of Fine Arts either for pleasure's sake or as an outlet of human activities. To them Fine Arts, divorced from religious flavour, meant nothing. There are indications in the Jātaka stories where dancing and singing have been

2. Majjhima Nikāya ; Kākaupama Sutta, translated by Lord Chalmers, "Further dialogues of the Buddha", vol I p. 89.

8. Fausbøll—Jātakas, vol VI, pp. 388 and 482.

4. Mrs. Rhys Davids : "Psalms of the Sisters", p. 154.

disapproved. The passages quoted above from the Majjhima Nikāya and the Therīgāthā substantiate this view with regard to painting ; or it may be that the systematization of technical knowledge had not taken place at so early a period. But even in the mediaeval time when the Brahminical writers poured out profuse texts, the Buddhists on the contrary remained almost silent.

**PREPARATION OF WALL-SURFACE :** Now the question of technique branches off into diverse courses, of which the preparation of wall-surface draws our immediate attention. Only once in the Vinaya text we have a report of a discussion between the Buddha and his disciples where the preparation of wall-surface has been explained. Below is given a summary from Rhys Davids' translation of the same.

At first, little balls of grain husks ( *thusapiṇḍaṃ* ) were applied to the wall. Then a layer of clay ( *saṇha maṭṭikaṃ* ), next the slime of trees ( *ikkāsaṃ* ). These finished, the wall surface was to be white-washed. After it is white-washed, little balls of grain husks were again to be coated over the wall. Thin layer of clay mixed with red powder ( *geruka* ) ; then a paste of mustard seed and beeswax oil ( *sasapa kuḍḍaṃ* and *sittha telakaṃ* ). These processes being finished the red chalk was to be applied to the specially prepared wall. (Whether this alludes to the first outline drawing by red chalk or anything else we cannot be very sure). We should also remember the fact that the Buddha directed the Bhikkhus to rub off the unevenness on the wall surface with their hands ( *pāṇikāya patibāhitvā* ) at the end of each process.

**COLOURS :** (a) Their different varieties.

The surface being prepared, the next important topic awaiting solution is the question of colours. How many different colours find mention in the early Buddhist literature ? The passages quoted above from the Therīgāthā and the Majjhima Nikāya<sup>2</sup> mention the following colours as were used in wall-painting ; viz, yellow orpiment, ( *haritāla* ), lac ( *lākhaṃ* ), yellow



(haliddam), blue (nīlam), and madder (mañjīṭṭham). From the evidence summarised above, it is permissible to assume that these were the colours generally used by the painters in wall-painting.

But these literary data do not furnish us with the details regarding the use of colour tones by the mixing of black and white with other colours or about a multiplicity of colours arising out of a mixture of one colour with another.

(b) How were the different colours obtained? This is an interesting question. Fortunately a passage<sup>5</sup> in the Vinaya text answers this enquiry. "At that time the Bhikkhus dyed cloth with ( cow ) dung or yellow clay ( pāṇḍumaṭṭikā ). The robes were discoloured. They told this thing to the Blessed One. 'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that you use the following six kinds of dye (rajanam) viz ; dye made of roots (mūlarajanam), dye made of trunk of trees (khanharajanam), dye made of barks (tacarajanam), dye made of leaves (pattarajanam), dye made of flowers (puppharajanam), and dye made of fruits (phalarajanam).'" But we cannot be satisfied with this scanty knowledge. From which particular tree or trees, fruits and flowers were these dyes obtained? Precise information is lacking.

The dyes were prepared by boiling ; c f. the passage (a continuation of the above text) : "The Bhikkhus dyed cloth with unboiled dye ; the cloth became ill-smelling. They told this thing to the Blessed One. 'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that you boil (pacitum) the dye and use little dypots.'"

But there is a fly in the ointment. The dyes and their preparation are spoken of as if applying only to the colouring of cloth. But in painting a wall, how were they prepared? We may assume that in both cases the process was the same. But in the absence of any technical treatise by the ancient Buddhist writers this statement awaits corroboration and modification.

5. Mahāvagga, VIII, 10, Translated by T. W. Rhys Davids, S. B. E. XVI pp. 204—205.

**SUBJECT-MATTER :** What were the subject-matters of these paintings ? The answers are diverse. In a Vinaya text<sup>1</sup> (*Cullavagga*, see ante), it is said, "Now at that time the Chabbaggiya Bhikkhus had imaginative drawings (*paṭibhāna cittaṃ*) painted on their Viharas—figures of men and figures of women. The matter when brought to the notice of the Buddha, he in his turn forbade the Bhikkhus to have imaginative drawings painted, i.e., the figures of men and women. But the Buddha however allowed the Bhikkhus to have representations of wreaths (*mala-kammaṃ*), creepers (*lata-kammaṃ*), makara's teeth (*makaradantakam*) and *pañca paṭṭhikam*" (Rhys David's translation—"cupboards" is not satisfactory).

The figures of men and women have been invariably denounced in the early Buddhist texts. For instance, the Bhikkhuni Vibhaṅga forbids the nuns from going and seeing such pictures. A *Dīgha Nikāya* passage<sup>6</sup> also forbids in the same strain. In the *Majjhima Sīla* the Buddha forbids his disciples among other things to shun *sobha nagarakam* (fairy scenes).

The predominance of male and female figures in these early wall-paintings is made manifest by this hue and cry of the over-scrupulous Buddhist monks. Like the proverbial King Canute they tried to stem the tide, but to no avail. We have this from the monumental evidences of the post-Christian Buddhist paintings, for instance, at Ajanta (caves, 16, 17, 1, 2).

In conclusion we can add a few remarks. The references to wall-paintings in this tentative survey of the early (pre-Christian) Buddhist literature are not at all comprehensive and lack definite information in many respects. One or two instances will suffice.

For example, the question of brush. The Buddhist painters undoubtedly used brushes ; otherwise how had they applied colours ? But there is not a single evidence as to the different varieties of brushes nor as to how they were prepared, whether

6. *Dīgha Nikāya*—Translated by T. W. Rhys David, "Dialogues of the Buddha", vol. I, *Baṛhaṅgala Sutta* p9.

from animal hairs or from vegetable fibres. Similarly with regard to the colours and dyes about which questions have been raised. How did they do the preliminary preparations? How did they draw the first outline? Was the Vajralepa known? These are a few of the many questions for which, unfortunately, we have no ready answer.



## TOUCH

THE high-tension wire  
Of desire,  
That connected me to you,  
Were boneless fingers.

This touch is not of gold in your hair,  
Nor of summer in leafy lakes  
Nor of eyes that question and share  
The positive glory of a fleeting hour,  
But of men dying, not in the wild June  
But dreaming of one, in a desolate desert.

Reminiscent of a green valley,  
Dismantled airships, bombed dug-outs  
And the streamlined grace of engines tortured  
Into fantastic shapes of iron.

Reminding us of the visit of the stranger ;  
We felt his touch in the sheath of the night  
Disturbing the unquiet sleep of fear.  
We left the shaded peace of our blackouts,  
And were teased out of the craven fear—  
Of being warrior and no warrior—  
Into the open line of sky and water  
And merciless accuracy of live engines.

Steel, they say, has no life  
But we felt its throb in membranes of our dying nerves  
Making life a shrill note of pain  
Like the wailing siren, when  
The suspense is over and the stranger has arrived.

These ghosts shook no ghostly hands,  
Across the barriers of eternity.  
Owen's ghosts were chivalrous ghosts,  
Of frank confessions in secret trenches.  
Ours were dry and dead  
Numbed like the Will,  
    In meaningless cries,  
    In windless skies.

George Sigerson.

# THE NINETEENTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE OF BENGAL

By N. C. GHOSH

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE of Bengal has been essentially a matter of the spirit, producing striking changes in Religion, Society and Culture, along with a demand of national growth. The earlier reformatory movements, covering three centuries from the 14th to the 17th, which had stirred not only Bengal but practically the whole of India had spent up their force to a considerable extent in the long struggle against medievalism. It was during this period of creative activity in modern times that Bengal showed its individualistic traits in many directions, in literature and art, in philosophy, in sociology, in law and religion. Kabikankan's CHANDI in literature gives us a wonderful picture of contemporary society in Bengal, Raghunandan's social laws are still being followed, Jimutbahan's DAYABHAGA is a great contribution in original thinking in the law of Inheritance. The Naya philosophy of Raghunath attracted scholars from all over India, Krishnananda Agambagish's great work on Tantra philosophy which has been made known to the West by the great Tantra scholar, the late Justice Woodroffe and last but not least Sri Chaitanya's Vaishnavism stirred the whole of India to its depths and its influence spread as far as Brindaban and Mathura in western U. P. and certain parts of Rajputana. All this creative activity, under the pressure of adverse political circumstances, gradually lost its force and died off and we come to the 18th century which may rightly be termed the darkest period of Bengal's as well as of India's history. In social usage, in politics, in the realm of religion and art we had in this century entered the zone of uncreative habit, of decadent tradition and ceased to exercise our humanity. But it was during the closing years of that century and the beginning of the next that various

factors appeared making a second renaissance and reformation inevitable.

It is erroneously believed in certain circles that the 19th century renaissance is solely born of the impact from the West. The impact from the West after the battle of Plassey was no doubt felt strongly in Bengal, but the many-sided creative activity and the rich contribution in thought that marked this reformation cannot be the result of foreign impact alone. There was more than one contributory factor in this renaissance, which was really born of the intense desire of a race with ancient culture and traditions to catch up the life-stream once more and expand and express itself.

Four distinct streams of ideas, directly connected with the impact from the West, can be traced as influencing the first quarter of the century. These were :

I. The intense proselytising effort directed by the circle of Christian missionaries settled in Serampore. The first printing press established by them and the first newspaper published from Serampore were, no doubt, great landmarks in the history of India and helped in the advancement of knowledge, but the somewhat militant attitude of these missionaries against the so-called idolatry of the Hindus and the unfair criticism of Hinduism and the ill-digested knowledge of Hindu philosophy that disseminated from this source, while creating a leaning towards western ideas in a section of the population of the day, also stirred the better minds of Bengal and led them to a search of their own thought treasures and a correct interpretation of same.

II. The second of these streams flowed from the newly established Hindu College ; the fountain head of this stream was the famous young professor Derozio, at whose feet the young intelligentsia of the Hindu College sat and drank deep into his positivistic and rationalistic teaching. A band of free thinkers developed who struck hard against the old ideas and traditions and chalked out new and individualistic traits of life. Some of

Derozio's famous disciples made valuable contribution towards the reformation that followed. This remarkable young professor's influence did not, however, last long as the orthodox community in Calcutta rose in a body against, what they thought, his reactionary teachings, and succeeded in getting his professorship in Hindu College terminated. He died broken-hearted soon after, at the tender age of twenty-three.

III. The third stream was the most potent of all. This flowed out of the dominant personality of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. To him can be traced the spiritual parentage of religious and social reformation, as of political awakening, in Modern India. He appeared as the herald of a new age to save Indian religion and civilisation from the deadening influence of superstitious and spiritual blindness, on the one hand, and the intrusion of Christianity and western modes on the other, at a time when our country, having lost its link with the inmost truths of its being, struggled under a crushing load of unreason, in abject slavery to circumstances. With profound learning, ecumenical culture, marked by acquaintance with so many classical languages as Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Latin, Greek and Hebrew and high philosophical acumen, Ram Mohan, a true son of India, where religion has ever formed the backbone of national life, was, in the words of Mr. Monier Williams, "perhaps the first earnest-minded investigator of the science of Comparative Religion that the world has produced." "He was the harbinger of the idea of Universal Humanism. Though Voltaire and Volney had a glimpse of the rising sun of Humanism, they distorted the view by pitting the East against the West, and minimising and traducing Eastern culture. Theirs was a militant humanism as opposed to the Raja's synthetic and universalistic point of view. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a Brahmin of Brahmins. He was also a Mohamedan with Mohamedans and a Christian with Christians. He could thus combine in his personal religion the fundamentals of Hindu, Christian and Islamic experiences. In this way he was, strange to say, multipersonal. But behind all



these masks there was yet another Ram Mohan Roy, the humanist, pure and simple, watching the procession of Universal Humanity in Universal History."

After retiring from the service of the East India Company in 1815, he settled in Calcutta and with his many-sided genius was able to introduce lasting reforms in various fields. His Atmiya Sabha later developed into the famous Brahma Sabha in 1828. The uplift of women, the suppression of the Satee, the resuscitation of ancient learning and philosophy are lasting monuments of this great man who was able to see a hundred years ahead of him. In his famous letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, over a hundred years back, he chalked out the idea of a World Federation of Nations, which is only today occupying an important place in world deliberations.

IV. The last of the streams of ideas I have referred to above, was the outcome of the reaction set up in orthodox circles against the inroads of reformation made into society and religion. This was headed by Sir Radha Kanta Dev of Sobhabazar who also directed his efforts towards a revival of ancient culture, religion and philosophy. It must be said to the credit of this group and its leader that their intense leaning towards the revival of the past did not blind them to the necessity of reforms in certain important directions. They were great advocates of female education in Bengal and helped a good deal in the furtherance of this cause.

These several streams flowed through the next quarter of the century, gathering force and strength; eddies were no doubt formed at times, but they broke through many a barren field and swept away the layer upon layer of unfertile crusts which had formed in years of darkness and brought richness and plenty to many in the domain of thought and culture.

The Raja's great tradition was maintained by Ramchandra Vidyabagish for some years after his death, then taken up and continued by famous men in Brahma Samaj—Maharsi Devendra Nath Tagore, the illustrious father of the great Poet,

Raj Narain Bose, Akshoy Kumar Sarkar and, greatest of all, Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen. But the Brāhmo Samaj of later years deviated considerably from the Brahma Sabha as founded by its great founder. The Raja never thought of establishing the Brahmo Samaj in opposition to the sublime ideas and principles of Hinduism ; his aim was to purge it of some of the grosser practices, prejudices and superstitions, which had overwhelmed it, by an appeal to rationalism and by adapting it to the changed conditions of his age. Keshab Chandra Sen, a man of wide culture and manifold experiences, an ardent aspirant after a Universal Religion, imbued the Brahmo Samaj of his day with devotional fervour through his message of Love and Faith. He was another ardent reformer and the rapidity with which social reform was proceeding under his leadership, led to a breach with the more conservative section of the Brahmos and the Samaj now practically divided into two bodies.

Another giant personality, who has left his mark as a reformer and a free thinker and who had worked hard in the cause of spread of education in Bengal, was Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. His efforts towards the legalising of widow remarriage is his lasting monument in the domain of social reforms.

The reformation of the 19th century certainly owed a good deal to the magnificent work in the field of education by some of the illustrious servants of the East India Company. Warren Hastings founded in 1781 the Calcutta Madrasa, Jonathan Duncan, Resident at Benares, opened in that holy city a Sanskrit College in 1791, and in 1784 Sir William Jones established the Bengal Asiatic Society, which later as Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, has, through its literary collections and publications, played an important part in the cultural history of modern India and of the modern world by making ancient Indian thought available to Europe and European scientific scholarship to India.

Other forces were also active and acted against this spirit of synthesis. Lord Macaulay in his well-known Minute of 2nd February, 1835, championed the introduction of western system

of education. It was no doubt of profound significance in the intellectual history of Modern India, but his unjust denunciation of Eastern literature, culture and knowledge produced undesirable results which it has taken India years to get over. It is even doubtful whether we have really got over the evil effects of the policy enunciated then, though over a hundred years have passed.

Educationists and philanthropists followed in the wake of the general awakening in the province and schools and colleges sprang up at various places. Besides the great Raja and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who have been mentioned already, Raja Radhakanta Dev, Maharaja Tejesh Chandra of Burdwan, Jaynarain Ghosal, David Hare, Bhudeb Mukherjee, Ram Gopal Ghose, Drinkwater Bethune, Mohammed Moshin, amongst others, contributed substantially towards the spread of education during this century.

All these forces and streams of ideas led to a general awakening leading to a revival and adaptation of the past literary traditions of India, which have been and are being harmonised with all that the West and the wide world has brought and is still bringing to the doors of India. Names that have been mentioned already and others like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Dinabandhu Mitra, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Hem Chandra Banerjee, Nobin Chandra Sen, were creative geniuses worthy to be reckoned in the history of India with equally great names in other creative periods of Indian history or elsewhere and destined in the future to shine clear as the first glowing sparks sent out of the fiery furnace where new and old were fusing.

The national awakening and renaissance easily led to wider political outlook and gave rise to Indian Nationalism which was certainly much more than the mere agitation of political coteries. It was the revival of an historical tradition, the liberation of the soul of a people. The spirit of revival and re-creation spread from sphere to sphere of the national life and, while deeply

affecting society, religion and literature, passed on into the field of politics and Bengal was able to give the lead to a new political consciousness. As far back as 1830, a batch of politically-minded students of the Hindu College demanded radical reforms, like abolition of the political power of the East India Company and provision for free and compulsory education. The British Indian Association which held fairly advanced and well-reasoned political views as early as 1852 was supplanted some years later by the more democratic Indian Association which was the creation of one of the greatest of political leaders of Modern India—Mr. (afterwards Sir) Surendra Nath Banerjee, who in 1872 gave up the Indian Civil Service which he had but joined a year earlier and devoted himself to educational work so as to kindle in the young the beginnings of public spirit and to inspire them with a patriotic ardour, fruitful of good to them and to the motherland.

The new political consciousness spread gradually to the whole of India, gathering forces, which eventually brought into existence the Indian National Congress. The name of the noble Englishman, Allen Octavian Hume, a distinguished officer who resigned his service in 1882, will ever remain associated with the formation of the Indian National Congress. It was his open letter, addressed to the Graduates of the Calcutta University, urging them to form an Association “for the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India—a little army *sui generis* in discipline and equipment”, which produced a deep impression and stirred the Indian intelligentsia throughout the length and breadth of this subcontinent and ushered in the Indian National Congress which had its first sitting on 27th December, 1885, in Bombay under the Presidency of Woomesh Chandra Bonnerjee of Calcutta. The subsequent history of the growth of Indian Nationalism is too well known to be reiterated here. Let me therefore pass on to another important cultural development in the domain of religious reformation which characterised the second half of this century.

While a spirit of reformation, pure and simple, marked the first half of the century, a spirit of synthesis marked the latter half. This spirit of synthesis is the keynote of the teachings of the great Saint of Dakshineswar—Sri Ramakrishna. A synthesis and a revival to stir the Hindu masses was needed. Sri Ramakrishna came and fulfilled this need. He was the living embodiment of godliness and his sayings and teachings are pages from the book of life. They were revelations from his own experiences which embraced the finding of the truth in every religion and every creed. I cannot do better than present to you the pen picture of this great saint by one of the greatest savants of modern Europe :

“The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years ( now 57 years ) his soul animates Modern India. He was no hero of action like Gandhi, no genius in art and thought like Goethe or Tagore. He was a little village Brahmin of Bengal, whose outer life was set in a limited frame without any striking incident, outside the political and social activities of his time. But his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and Gods. It was a part of the very source of energy, the Divine Shakti of whom Vidyapati, the old poet of Mithila and Ramprasad of Bengal sang.” ( Romain Rolland : *The Life of Ramakrishna*.)

His mantle fell on his great disciple Swami Vivekananda of dynamic personality, who carried the message of Vedanta and the sayings of his great Master across the seas to America and Europe and who is looked upon as the “first Hindu whose personality won demonstrative recognition abroad for India’s ancient civilisation and for her new born claim to Nationhood.” The closing years of this great century and the earlier years of the next were dominated by the great Swami and the poet Tagore—in the field of culture, religion, art and literature. “Tagore’s poetry is India. It is the product of his devotion to Indian culture. It is the soul of a people, not merely the

emotion of a man ; a systematic view of life, not merely a poetic mood ; a culture, not merely a tune."

It is not possible to do justice to the creative activities of this century in Bengal in a brief review such as this, as an entire literature of lasting value and a secure place in world's literature has been created during these hundred years, and a most valuable contribution made to world thought. It is only possible to indicate a few of the great landmarks. If the cultural history of the world comes ever to be written without any political taint or bias, Bengal's contribution during the past century to world culture and thought will be no mean one. The considerable progress that the intellect of Bengal has made in recent years in the study of philosophy and science owed its inspiration to the spirit of renaissance in the past century. Eminent philosophers like Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Scientists like Dr. Sir J. C. Bose, Dr. Sir P. C. Roy, Dr. Meghnad Saha have gained international fame. May the torch thus kindled remain ever lighted and be passed on from generation to generation undimmed.

In the present turmoil in the world when men of all races are turning their minds to find a better world order after this cataclysm, there is need for casting our eyes back to the Great Raja, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Poet Tagore and last but not least Sri Aravinda, who, thank God, is still with us.

## TAGORE AND TAMIL LITERATURE

By P. N. APPUSWAMI

As in politics so in literature great personalities transcend the severe frontiers of race, nationality and language to make their influences felt all over the world. This, however, does not happen suddenly or overnight—not at any rate in the case of literature—but is a gradual and slow process, which may be described to be one of permeation or infiltration rather than a sudden taking by storm. Locally, where the personality lived and worked, there may be a great upheaval, a wrenching of many old moorings, but of these, in the beginning, the outside world knows nothing and cares less.

Thus when Tagore was enriching the Bengali literature and flooding it with his essays, stories, poems and songs, we in the south of India knew little about him or his immortal work. Our province was engrossed in its parochial problems and took no note of what was happening to its neighbour. Direct contacts there were none at all, at that time between Bengali and Tamil. The real renaissance in the Tamil country had not yet reached its full swing or acquired any momentum, and its intellectuals had not risen enough in their stature to look round and watch their neighbours, and the masses of the country had not waked up at all.

However, those who were working for the political and social regeneration of the land had already begun to realise that it would be incomplete without a literary regeneration as well. So some of them had struggled to infuse new life and spirit into a language which had almost become inert, hide-bound and case-hardened. Ultimately they had succeeded in freeing it from too much formality and pedantry, and had made of it a vehicle—though still inadequate—and had converted it into a means of communication to all instead of merely to the learned

few. They had experimented with form and style—both in prose and verse—while the strict grammarians frowned at them in displeasure.

To those trying to achieve a new expression the English translations of Tagore's works, so expressive of the new awakening in politics and society and of a new devotion in religion, came as an agreeable surprise. They revealed to the workers that they were not alone in their literary attempts at evolving new forms of language and new modes of thought. They showed them that similar forces were at work in other languages as well, forces which were really constructive in their character and not disruptive as the grammarians foretold.

Encouraged by Tagore's example they pursued their activities on the new lines and we see the earliest evidences of these in Subrahmanya Bharati's writings. There were not many followers then. But when the world acclaimed Tagore as a great poet and writer, after the award to him of the Nobel Prize, some thought of translating a few of his writings into Tamil. Subrahmanya Bharati, V. V. S. Aiyar, Madhaviah and Desikavinayakam Pillai, to name only a few, translated some of his essays, short stories and poems. Some of his longer works, *THE POST OFFICE*, *THE WRECK*, *BROKEN TIES*, *JOGAJOG*, *THE EYESORE* and some others were translated later. Most of these translations were made from the English versions and some from the Hindi and were not always in the happiest vein, having to undergo a double transmutation. Recently attempts have been made to translate the poet's works direct from the Bengali, and these are, as might be expected, more successful. Yet we can hardly expect an ordinary translator to possess the extraordinary skill requisite to capture all the nuances in the language of a great poet and to render them with equal facility in another language, though his own. Particularly is this so in the case of poetry. Only a great poet can seize and represent the heart of another, but it is unlikely that he will, for, normally, he would rather express himself than mirror another.



Tagore's national song "Jana-gana-mana" is being sung to-day in the heart of the Tamil country in the poet's own language. No adequate translation of it has yet appeared. Its words may be translated and the sense too, but its lilt and its rhythm and its melody which fuses it into one organic whole, these are well-nigh untranslatable ; and when they are, it will not be a translation but a re-creation that would be achieved.

So too in the case of his lyrics and poems, some of which have been translated. In comparison with the originals the translations sound tame and inharmonious. But still translators keep on trying, prompted by the beauty of the originals and undeterred by the failure of their own efforts.

In another direction too, Tagore has influenced the evolution of modern Tamil literature. His short stories, so full of poetic content, have exercised a fascination over the Tamil writers, many of whom try to create stories on the Tagore model.

In yet another direction attempts are being made to imitate Tagore's "prose-poetry" rendered familiar through his English translations. Many of those, however, who try this new form are ill-equipped for their task,—having more enthusiasm than ability and not knowing all the rules of the game. These pseudo-mystics and pseudo-poets harm none but themselves, for their work will not live. But out of these ugly ducklings we hope there might arise one with a sense of language, form and beauty, one possessed of an artist's soul.

Yet to the masses in the Tamil country, Tagore is merely an honoured name ; and on Tamil writers his influence has been stimulative rather than directive, for he has shown them the inspiring example of an Indian achieving world-greatness in literature.

## TAGORE AND MODERN KANNADA LITERATURE

*By R. V. JAGIRDAR*

THE history of Kannada literature goes back to more than 2000 years ago ; but the origin of modern Kannada literature can be traced only as late as in the last decade of the last century ; and between the two lies a period of almost two centuries when even the phrase "Kannada Literature" does not exist ! Modern Kannada literature stands like the few tiny, twinkling, first sprouts on a huge tree which towers entirely bare otherwise. The sprouts appear as if unrelated to the roots, long down below.

The reasons for this peculiar "unrelatedness" of modern and old Kannada literature are obvious. The inspiration in the last century came not from the traditional heritage but from an outside source. The study of English literature and history was the first cause of our new literature. But we, in Karnatak, did not have as many facilities for English education fifty years ago as we may have now, with the result that the said inspiration came not directly but through other Indian literatures that were being influenced by the study of English literature. The earliest sister-literature was that of Bengal. Our first literature was the rendering into Kannada of famous modern Bengali novels.

The "national" life of an Indian is as little useful and as unreal as the geography he studies. We have less contact with our neighbouring provinces and their life and literature than with those of outside races. And so Bengali literature remained quite remote and unknown till almost the time when the whole of India one day learned, with surprise first and then with pride and satisfaction, that a Bengali writer had won the world-coveted Nobel Prize. Of course, that writer was known to us through his activities and agitations at the time of the

partition of Bengal. But now it was a different picture we saw. Here is a poet singing in the first voice of Indian nationhood ; here is a writer with the soul of traditional Hindu culture expressing itself through a body of the modern making ; here is a seer who, in the name of sincerity of feeling and naturalness of expression, reveals to us new paths and new forms.

I do not know if future historians of Kannada literature of the 20th century would accept my point of view. Nevertheless, I am confident when I say that Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was seen by some of our young writers in the aspects I have mentioned above. The Geleyara Gumpu ( Friends' Circle ) of Dharwar represents the first new tendencies in Kannada literature. And in the writings of this circle, Dr. Tagore's influence, direct or indirect, could be seen quite visibly. The poets of the Gumpu have given to Kannada free and fresh lyrical strains in the style of Dr. Tagore. The voice of new India, of India one and indivisible, is resonant in the outpourings of these enthusiastic bards of Karnatak. Mother India, Mother of all Indians, *Visva Bharati*, is the favourite theme of earlier lyrics.

The sensitive soul of the Sage of Santiniketan reflects here as well. The poverty of the people, the miseries of the millions, the sufferings of ignorance moved our younger poets even when there was no Brahmo or some such rebellious outlook in social life. That touch of mysticism which is so characteristic of Rabindranath and which understands life as one and eternal was a distinctive feature of our first poets.

One name I must mention here ; that of the vigorous young poet, K. V. Puttappa. He seems to have caught something direct from the Guru. The re-interpretation of our ancient cultural heritage is a striking peculiarity of some of Dr. Tagore's writings. Mr. Puttappa shows the same peculiarity and the same missionary ardour. In many of his poetical plays, he has selected themes from the epics but has

rendered them into modern life. And again Mr. Puttappa reveals the other characteristic of the Bengali inspirer, namely that emotion and not empty reason forms the true content of life.

Dr. Tagore's influence has definitely given us the emotional way of approach and the natural sincerity of expression to life. Even to this day, the author of *Gitanjali* forms a source of inspiration and an object of enthusiastic study. Only ten years ago Mr. Sali Ramchandrarao, the sweetest of our singers, captured the hearts of Kannadigas by his Kannada version of Rabindranath's "Abhisāra" or "Vāsavadattā". The short stories of the Poet are still rendered into Kannada. Any historian of the future will have to give a prominent place to the way in which Dr. Tagore inspired our first poets.

## TAGORE AND ORIYA LITERATURE

*By* H. C. BARAL

MUCH of the wealth which enriches Oriya literature today belongs to an era with which our own times have but little in common, whether we compare the standards of living or of the arts or of politics. With the times, the background of life and culture has almost completely changed, presenting a literature which has progressively seceded from the old traditions and which today boldly asserts its "difference" from the older schools as its hall-mark of superiority. The ornamental styles of Upendra Bhanj and Abhimanyu Samantashinhar are not only not in vogue, but are regarded as artificial to a degree which precludes natural expression of life and thought.

Between the past and the present phases of Oriya literature, the works of a few writers form a connecting link, but this is hardly adequate to bridge the gulf that separates them. The colourful and leisurely life of a rich Orissa, ruled by many powerful Princes in peace and in war, is portrayed in the earlier works, but that tone and colour are lacking in the literature of the later periods when Orissa slowly lost its power and importance and was finally reduced to a number of vassal states, shorn of the former grandeur and spontaneous advance of the arts.

The British conquest of Orissa appears to have synchronised with the lowest ebb of political disorganisation, and thereafter a slow but steady revival of its traditional arts and crafts seems to have asserted itself.

During the later half of the twentieth century Oriya literature failed to show its past vigour and imagination and was but an unsuccessful imitation of its former glorious achievements. The reorientation of fundamental values of life, as revealed by the newly imported western civilisation, failed to inspire the writers of that age sufficiently; all that

happened was a slow awakening in the thought-world to a more liberal general outlook. This made it possible for writers to paint persons other than princes and courtiers as main characters, and to bring the level of literature within the reach of the masses, so to say.

This was the state of affairs in Oriya literature when Poet Tagore's genius was blossoming out into its fullest glory. Very naturally it attracted the attention of the rising Oriya poets of that age, but somehow the influence did not develop into downright imitation at that stage. Perhaps it was because something like a renaissance era in Oriya literature had been inaugurated a few years ago, and the attention of the aspiring Oriya poets at the time was still fascinated by the highly technical styles of Bhanja and Samantasinhar, and a host of other old writers of repute.

Viewed in the retrospect, it would appear as if an attempt was made—perhaps unconsciously—by the Oriya poets of the day to harmonise the old traditions with those revealed through the great work of the poets and writers of the West and with the comparatively modern works of Bengali literature,—particularly the poems and songs of Tagore, breathing a new atmosphere of romantic idealism and vivid imagery.

Of course, the attempt was doomed to failure from the very beginning. The native genius of Bengal had found its natural expression in the poems, songs and stories of Tagore, but the same background was entirely lacking in the case of the Oriya poets of the time. Modern education had made but little progress in Orissa; the minds of educated Oriyas had hardly grasped the ideas and ideals blown across the seas from the West.

Thus it was left to the present generation of Oriya writers and poets to draw, in any marked degree, upon the most wonderful and varied literature of the world—the literature of Tagore. The mysticism of his poetry and its early romance, the liberalism of social ideals in his stories and novels, his

idealism, his patriotism, his love of Nature and of Man, his philosophy of life, have all exercised appreciable influence on the younger generation of Oriya writers, and on Oriya literature, in general. Even linguistic peculiarities coined by Tagore have crept into Oriya, though not without protests from the die-hard section of Oriya writers. The ultra-modern touch introduced by Tagore into his later works has also been actively appreciated by some young Oriya writers and imitated in their own writings ; the result has been rather unsatisfactory, because in the Orissa of today such ultra-modern conditions hardly exist.

Poet Tagore's influence on Oriya literature has given to Orissa many young and once-influential organisations ; it still continues to inspire the rising Oriya genius to heights which it has yet to attain. The real set-back against his influence today is the later slogan of "mass-literature", which has made its forceful appeal to the mass-mind, felt not only in Orissa but within Bengal itself. The only difference is that whereas in Bengal the influence of Tagore has had ample time and opportunity to be fully assimilated, no such opportunity ever came to the literature-minded public of Orissa. In consequence, there is a possibility of gradual neutralisation of the influence exercised by Tagore's works on Oriya literature, but even so, its deeper effect on the general tone of Oriya literature can never be effaced.

## ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

In that August sky the moon was at her full  
And there where he lay between a sleep and a sleep  
Poured her illumination white as wool ;  
The whiteness of her made one want to weep  
For the healing Finger's sad decree  
On so noble mortality.

O was the night on fire for him, night without flaw ?  
He on billows of pain spread, his body's forces  
Met in a single stare, what dreamed, what saw ?  
Was it Death's team of bold, black, snorting horses,  
Death in his chariot at the porch  
With trumpet, banner and torch ?

Nay, rather, with light step this visitant  
Of the unheralded noon, coming unheard,  
Stood in the hushed chamber, strangely hesitant :  
Death looked upon the face of pain and stirred  
To a godlike grief looked once again  
And pitying, sundered pain from pain.

How fitting the manner of it that so  
He should be put out of life's tempest quietly,  
And the moment how fitting when we had no  
Leisure for slow tears nor sorrow's pageantry :  
Our beloved poet had no use  
For sorrow's shell and outward shows.

But who can deny the hawk his intent elation,  
Or who forbid the wild symphony of the wind,  
Or the sudden river her inundation ?



Command not Sorrow her tears not to spend,  
Something to the fond heart concede :  
This farewell rite, this natural need.

So we arrayed him in his singing robes,  
Made him a wedding garland of fair blooms,  
A shut lotus-bud in his hand where close  
It lay like a queen in her golden rooms,  
And ere we left the door ajar  
Upon his brow a sandal star.

That was just as he would have wished it, to set forth  
On his last journey, to his last station,  
Like a royal traveller bearing gifts of worth :  
Deliverance was not for him in renunciation,  
Not for him the red brown dress,  
Nor the lone pilgrim foot's impress.

For he loved life, was tuned to the joy of living,  
The pain and the pity and the peace he knew,  
And his for the asking was Nature's lavish giving,  
The mastery of his mystery, the clue  
To the ways of the human heart,  
The power and splendour of his art.

He would say to our present time and its tinsel allures :  
'Choose not Pleasure frail as dewdrop that laughing dies,  
But sorrow choose that alone is strong and endures,  
Trust love though it bring sorrow', he, our wise  
Poet, would have love belong  
To sorrow, like words to a simple song.

In his imagination he saw poised the sword  
Of the Lord of Thunder, clean as lightning's spoke,  
Long-curved as the outspread wings of the bird

Of Vishnu, yearned for the final ecstasy of its stroke,  
    'Because I have loved life' he could foretell,  
    'I know I shall love death as well.'

The songs he made, they ride the furious storm,  
    They float, they glide on the waters of his land,  
Dropping from veils of dawn and dusk they come,  
    They rise, they fly to the crack of the rustic's wand,  
    They enter unafraid  
    The heart of the little maid.

A people registered their hopes and fears  
    In the lays he sang to them, the tales he told  
Of their lives, as he revealed to dull ears  
    What they hear not, what from sight dim eyes withhold—  
    Somewhere the hidden melody,  
    The spot of colour in their sky,

Which certainly made bright their toiling days,  
    Gave them a sense of glory they had hungered for,  
They were not so poor now as to lack praise  
    Of sober judges, no need to go from door  
    To door, while luckier nations met  
    At civilisation's fete.

And he had a dream of freedom that was brave,  
    There was no place there for the mind in chains,  
No place for the antics of the slouching slave,  
    None for the enormous dark historic stains,  
    'Tomorrow' he said, 'will pertain unchecked  
    To man delivered—Man erect.'

But already when he dreamed these things the nightmare trouble  
    Had started on its course, growing to insolent size,  
And all his dream, alas ! like winsome bubble

Burst amid falling towers and unweeping eyes,  
It was best, kindest, he should lie unfurled  
From the ruins of a falling world.

The hour of valedictions, the hour to respond  
To the faint-at-first and far-off silvery spell,  
The keen call of the Flute of the great Beyond ;  
He is not gone to fields of pale asphodel,  
But to some gladder grove of oleanders  
That largesse of gaiety squanders,

Where, may be, in that different clime  
He has with those others a date to mind,  
Dead famous poets of an older time,  
Whose spirits still hold converse with their kind,  
Who only to the gods are peers,  
Free from the swift devouring years.

O Memory, be magnanimous !  
Than Time, the reckless Wrecker, stronger prove,  
Though we shall not rear him a stately house  
As one great lover reared for his dead love,  
Nor upon ancient skill depend  
To keep him from mortality's end.

We who could then hardly the flood of our sorrow stem  
Gave to the finer elements his honoured dust,  
Let him be fire, let him be air, let him  
Be ash and to the sacred wave dispersed.  
But Fame will for her dear son take thought  
And raise him clear of our temporal lot.

R. R. SRESHTA

August 7, 1941.

# LETTERS TO W. W. PEARSON<sup>1</sup>

From RABINDRANATH TAGORE

[ William Winstanley Pearson was a friend and close associate of Rabindranath from 1912 to 1923, when he met his death in a railway accident in Italy, while on his way to India. He began his work in India as a missionary in the London Missionary Society, at Bhowanipur in Calcutta. Later on he joined the Poet at Santiniketan. "The best loved Englishman in India"—this is how the London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* described him. He travelled widely in different parts of the world, both with the Poet and with C. F. Andrews and by himself. Wherever he was, he was the friend of the poor and the oppressed. His love for India and the Indians was immense. "Even on his death-bed, when it is doubtful whether he was quite conscious, he was heard to mutter, 'My one only love—India!'" During the last war, in 1918, the British Home Government ordered his deportation from Peking as an "undesirable". "He was consequently, without trial or formulated charge, shipped to" England, "under guard and placed on parole in Manchester."

At Santiniketan he was the children's best friend, in class, at play and as their vigilant nurse in sickness. The hospital at Santiniketan is named after him. He was also a great lover and friend of the Santhal villagers. He learnt Bengali and translated *Gora*. For further details of his life and activities, see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II (Old Series, 1924-25), page 229; Vol. V (New Series, Part I), page 33; and the *Modern Review*, November, 1923.—*Editor*. ]

Oakridge Lynch, Stroud, Glos.  
19 Aug. 1912.

Dear Mr Pearson,

How very good of you to think of me and send me the *Child's Garden of Verses*. It is a beautiful book, full of unexpected delights. I could finish it at a single sitting but I deliberately held back, leisurely to prolong my enjoyment of sudden surprises.

I enjoyed my stay at Butterton Vicarage and would have spent the remaining days of August there but I fell ill and came here to try a change. Unfortunately I am not much better, so I

\* The original MSS. of these letters are in the Rabindra Museum, Rabindra-Bhavana, Santiniketan.

have determined not to give any thought to my illness and enjoy life where I am and as I am. I will stay here till the end of this week and then I go to London where my address will be : 37 Alfred Place, South Kensington. I must be somewhere near your office and I hope we shall meet often.

Very sincerely yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Shantiniketan,*  
*May 16, 1915.*

My dear Pearson,

The day I was about to leave Calcutta for a course of wandering life I got the news that Andrews had been attacked with cholera. So I have come to Bolpur and I am glad to say that the worst is over and he is fairly convalescent. Dr. Maitra is with me and he assures me that there is no more cause for anxiety for Andrews.

I have got your letter about Dattatreya. Do not for a moment doubt that it was financial difficulty which was at the root of his leaving the ashram. Though I do not interfere in the management of the school, I should have made an exception in the case of Dattatreya, if I were not convinced that the school would not be able to meet his requirements, the details of which he set before us. I know, as I was in one of the meetings, that the school authorities racked their brains to make some provision for him in the ashram and with extreme reluctance they came upon the decision. They went so far as to suggest that S—should be removed from the school to make room for Dattatreya and the suggestion was rejected not on the ground of sentiment, but of necessity.

You know how deeply I love you and I earnestly hope you will not take it amiss when I say that the growing feeling of distrust towards your colleagues in the ashram is leading you astray

from the path of charity and love. Though I am a poet and foolish in most things, I have some insight in human nature, and I know, these people, with whom I have been working for years, are sincere. We become cruel, and our ideals become mere abstractions when we look upon our friends and human beings as mere agents for carrying out the ideas which we consider as the best. I hate falsehood and treachery, for it is treason against God, but I have infinite patience for differences of ideals and outlooks upon life. Thank God that Jagadananda Babu, Nepal Babu and others were not cut out in my own pattern and that is one of the reasons why they are truly helping me in realising my own life. If I began to despise them for some advantage I imagine I have over them, I should hold myself utterly unworthy to enjoy that advantage. Of course, Shantiniketan school has its ideals, which, though not rigidly definite, are definite enough to guide us. But differences of readings they permit, and divergences of methods to a great extent they allow. If they did not they would turn men into machines and goodness would attain its symmetry at the cost of its life. We are quite at liberty to disapprove some of the actions of our friends but it should be the very last thing to distrust their good faiths. With very great pain I have been noticing for some time past Andrews also drifting into this hopeless mood of contemptuous mistrust which is strong because vague and which will never lead to the शान्तम् शिवम् अद्वैतम्.<sup>1</sup> But I shall wait and trust God to remove this mist of misunderstanding and lead us to the clarity of truth and light of love. He has brought us together and before he calls us back we shall know that we are one though we are different.

With best love,

Yours affectionately,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

1. *Śāntam, Śivam, Advaitam.*

*Jorasanko.*<sup>1</sup>

[ ? June, 1915 ]

My dear Pearson,

I cannot tell you what a great joy your letter gave me. The storm that we have passed through is the sign of a healthy life—it shows that a living spirit has been working in the Ashram. Life, by its very movement, throws up dust every moment—and the day of house-cleaning comes, if there is a real *Lakshmi* in the house. We must not lose our hearts at such disturbances but rather welcome them. I feel that our Ashram is entering upon a new stage and the doubts and struggles that preceded it were necessary. Do not think that we shall ever reach the region of perpetual calm—but keep deep in your heart peace and faith and love and let every period of pain and trouble make for the renewal of your life in God and for the casting off of the envelopment of self.

Andrews has recovered from his illness. He was face to face with death and I am sure this will help him in his spiritual *sādhana*. He is living in a Nursing Home in Wood Street gaining strength.

There are going to be some changes in our school. I have asked B——doctor to leave us and also S—— ; R——, the store-keeper, is going—and among the minor changes you will find me leaving the Ashram for an indefinite period.

With best love,

Yours affectionately  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Calcutta,*

*June 19, 1915.*

My dear Pearson,

I fled into the fastnesses of the hills to find that Father Himalaya cannot protect him whom fate has chosen as its victim. Letters, letters everywhere, never a moment to think.

1. The MS. is undated.

I am thanking right and left, day and night, till my heart becomes black with ingratitude.

We must try to raise the standard of teaching in our school and we have already appointed two thoroughly qualified B. Sc. teachers for Mathematics in place of A— and N— and S—. Hitherto we have been using cheap materials, mostly for want of funds and also for lack of energy and discrimination but we should get rid of that and try to do our best for the boys.

I am trying to start a model school in our Jorasanko house where rational methods will be followed and board of examiners defied. If it is successful it will be an object lesson to our Bolpur school. We shall keep you in the advisory board — for you will be able to help it when in course of time it shows any sign of ossification.

Yours in love,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Srinagar, Kashmir,  
Oct, 11, 1915.*

My dear Pearson,

A few nights ago I dreamt that I met you somewhere in some battlefield. You were standing on a high land with a soldier by your side. Your face was deathly pale, full of profoundest sorrow. I did not know the reason but it seemed to me quite natural. I raised my hand to touch you but I found that you were wounded in your right arm,—I said to myself that death had pierced his soul and a prolonged and loud wail came from my heart. It was an intense suffering for me,—I suppose it was your pain which was transferred to my heart. Then I woke up. I never had such a vivid dream before. You were silent, your eyes lowered, the whole world of sorrow seemed concentrated in you in its immense stillness. Since then my mind was anxious about you till I got your letter day before yesterday. The dream had affected me so deeply that I had been discussing it with several persons trying to probe the



mystery of psychology that could create such vivid vision and intense feeling out of nothing, never suspecting that this dream came to me through the medium of infinite mind that lies between individuals. It gave me the truth for a moment that in reality your suffering was mine.

The barrier of self is a maya, and when it is dispelled then we know that in our suffering we have tasted the draught of sorrow that wells up from the heart of creation, flowing out to merge and be transformed into the sea of Endless Joy. When we do not see ourselves in the infinite, when we imagine our sorrow to be our very own then it becomes untrue, and its burden becomes heavy. I realise more and more the truth of Buddha's teaching that the root of all our miseries is in this consciousness of self, which must be translated into the consciousness of All before we can solve the mystery of pain and be free. Our emancipation lies through the path of suffering, we must unlock the gate of Joy by the key of pain. Our heart is like a fountain and so long as it is driven through the narrow pipe of self it is full of fear and doubt and sorrow, for then it is in the dark and does not know its end, but when it comes out in the open, in the bosom of the All, then it glistens in the light and sings in the joy of freedom. The narrowness of the self is a blessing when the fountain plays in full force, for then its bondage is being translated every moment into emancipation and its pain into love.

Yours with love,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Calcutta,*  
*July 4, 1917.*

Dear Pearson,

It has been a great relief to find your letter after such a long time. I have been wanting to write to you that though we are all longing to see you among us we are ready to wait patiently till this war is over. I shall never forget that room

in Nara Hotel where I went through such a painful struggle when you announced your intention of parting from me. But in the small hour of the night a flash of joy struck my heart with the assurance that this was needed and that I should completely trust this dispensation of Providence and be glad. I feel deeply thankful for this inner message which I received and which made our parting so peaceful and sweet. I know the disappointment of our boys was much greater in missing you than their joy in finding me back, but they understand — for they are sure of your love and they can wait. I suppose you know by this time that Andrews has also left us for Fiji where he is likely to spend about a year.

Just when we made some arrangement for Mukul to settle down to his work his father died. It is a terrible trial for him, with his widowed mother and brothers and sisters helplessly thrown upon his care. His period of mourning is not yet over and we must see what we can do to help him.

The summer vacation has been over some time ago, but I have not yet been able to join our school. For Bela<sup>1</sup> is ill, and doctors suspect tuberculosis. I have very little hope of her recovery and all that I can do is to give her my company, in order to keep her cheerful. However, I must pay a short visit to my school and see how things are going on. Ramananda Babu has bought Sachin Babu's bungalow in the Ashram where he is going to live with his daughters. He will be of very great help to us when there are sure to be constant big gaps in my presence in the school.

The gramophone, the printing press and the well-digging apparatus have not yet been heard of. I have neither had any invoice from anybody. Do you know what happened to them?

I am sure you have received the cuttings of all the reviews that appeared in the English periodicals of your "Shantiniketan". They are all eulogistic, without exception. Do you not think it is

1. His eldest daughter Madhurilata, who died in 1918.

a perilous situation for our Ashram to have to live in the focus of world's attention ? However, we shall try to survive it.

Please give my kindest regards to Monsieur and Madame Richards and remember me kindly to Mr Speight. If the July number of *Modern Review* reaches you, you will find my introduction to the "To the Nations" in an enlarged form. You know how hastily I had to write it and I was not quite satisfied with it.

With love,

Yours

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Calcutta,*

*Feb, 28, 1918.*

Dear Pearson,

I thought I had earned my right to a few months' quiet after my lecturing tour in America. But the time has been difficult for me and the strain too great. Unfortunately the outward appearance of fatigue is not often convincing enough to support one's claim to rest and when I am besieged with the clamouring host of crowd I do not know how to put them off. However, I must not indulge in the luxury of complaining, for it leads one to excesses of self-pity and exaggeration and to the vanity in imagining that he is the most miserable creature in existence.

I have come once again to Calcutta from Shantiniketan, for Bela's condition has grown worse. Death is the obverse side of life, it is one with it, and I do not look upon it with any particular fear. But disease is evil, and when we do not know how to fight it, it makes one's heart rebellious.

We are expecting Andrews every day. I have got his letter some time ago which he had written three weeks before his intended time of departure. It will be a great relief to me when he comes. I hope he will be able to stay with us for some appreciable length of time before he starts off on his errands of erratic beneficence. From the accounts we have had it seems

that Andrews' mission in Fiji and Australia has been successful to a large extent. It is a great service he has done to the helpless emigrants from India and our people will be grateful to him. I had a letter from Sydney University asking me if it were true that I would not visit Australia if I was wanted there. I have written in answer that it would be wrong on my part if I refused to accept any invitation sent to me in right spirit. I think pride of patriotism is not for me. I earnestly hope that I shall find my home everywhere in this world before I leave it. We have to fight against wrongs and suffer for the cause of righteousness—but let us have no petty jealousies and quarrels with our neighbours because we have different names.

I have instructed Macmillans to settle my accounts with the Omaha firm and Pond. I do not know whether Brett has received my letter in which I have asked him to try to realise for me the insurance money due to me on account of the oil engine lost in the sea. When you write to him please ask him if it will be possible for him to do me this service. The gramophone and its records keep profound silence, contrary to their nature. Is it a case of misappropriation on the part of the sea or some carrying agency in America?

It is evident that you do not receive all my letters. So I think of Gita's teaching when I write to you and simply do my work without taking account of results. The Chinese lanterns, gongs and lamps which you have sent to me have not yet arrived. The boys will be delighted when they come. My love to you.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Calcutta,*

*March 6, 1918.*

Dear Pearson,

I have asked Macmillans to pay off the money which I owe to the Omaha people. The printing press is still rusting in Shantiniketan. I have not yet received permission to

use it. I shall wait a few more weeks and then I shall ask the good citizens of Lincoln, who made a present of it to my school, to take it back. Each one of us in this unfortunate country is looked upon with suspicion—and our authorities cannot see us clearly through the dust which they themselves raise. Humiliation follows us at every step, in every good work we try to do. All blind methods are easy methods in the beginning, they save lot of thinking and expenditure of sympathy, but such cheap methods do not pay in the end. For after all, bullyism is stupidity, it assumes frightfulness only because it does not know its way. What is radically wrong with our rulers is this—they are fully aware that they do not know us, and yet they do not care to know us. And in consequence, in our penny-dreadful administration, thorny hedges are springing up of unscrupulous intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled, giving rise to a condition which is not only miserable, but unspeakably vulgar. Our people are intimidated, no doubt, but they are losing their respect for the Government which is the only moral and therefore sure foundation of foreign rule. I have just received a letter from Thadani, complaining of the insult and harassment which only Indian British subjects have to go through in all British ports, and which have the effect of making them ashamed of the Government under which they live. Such treatments are sinking deep in the memory of the people, and the moral Providence of History cannot altogether ignore such accumulated burden of indignities loaded upon humanity.

I got a telegram from Andrews about three days ago from Singapore. So he will be here within a week. I feel very tired and when he comes he will be of great help to me.

With love

Yours

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Santiniketan,  
বুধবার [Wednesday]  
July 18, 1918.

Dear Pearson,

I wish you could realize how deeply your friends in this country feel for you in your present trial. It must give you consolation to know that the gift of love has fallen abundantly to your share, growing all the more in intensity because of the injustice you suffer. When we suddenly came across the news of your arrest for some political offence, our distress was intolerably keen because we knew we could not in any way help you. All that I could do was to write a letter to the Viceroy letting him know my sentiments about yourself and asserting my firm belief that some misunderstanding must be at the root of your trouble. But Andrews, being a member of the dominant race and naturally having faith in his power to get wrongs redressed, went about energetically to move earth and heaven in your behalf. We admired him and envied him, but being accustomed to disappointments, were not at all sanguine about the result, though I had trust in the resources in your nature, feeling sure that all through your struggle ultimately you would be the gainer.

I find most of my letters sent to you in Japan have not reached you. It was a gratuitous piece of cruelty on the part of the authorities concerned in the suppression of them. For my letters to you were of personal nature—plain as a vegetable soup with not an ounce of political stock added to it. Strangely enough, my last letter to you contained a translation of a poem of mine which, without my knowing it, was appropriate. I give it below :

*Give me the supreme courage of love,  
this is my prayer—  
the courage to speak, to do, to suffer at thy will,  
to leave all things or be left alone.*

*Give me the supreme faith of love  
   this is my prayer,—  
 the faith of the life in death, of victory in defeat,  
       of the power hidden in the frailness of beauty,  
       of the dignity of pain that accepts hurt  
   but disdains to return it.<sup>1</sup>*

I wonder if you ever got the letter containing this poem. If you did it must have been just about the time you started for China. Let me conclude with another poem of mine :—

*I can never believe that you are lost to us, my King,  
 Your will works behind the veil of despair,  
       and in your time opens the gate of the impossible.  
 You come like a guest ever expected  
       into the unprepared house.  
 Dumb ruins at your touch become like a bud  
       in whose bosom grows unseen the flower of fulfilment.  
 Therefore I still have hope—not that the wrecks  
   will be mended—  
       but a new world will arise.<sup>2</sup>*

With love from me and from the Ashram,  
   Ever affectionately yours  
   RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan,  
 Oct. 6. 1918.*

Dear Pearson,

All through this last session I have been taking classes in the morning, spending the rest of the day writing text books. It is a kind of work apparently unsuitable for a man of my temperament. But I found it not only interesting, but restful. Mind has its own burden, which can be lightened

1. This translation with slight alterations was published in *The Fugitive*, Section III, No. 87.

2. For another version of this translation, with considerable alterations, see POEMS, No. 26 ( published by Visva-Bharati ).

when it is floated on a stream of work. Some engrossing idea also helps us in the same way—but ideas are unreliable—they run according to no timetable whatever—and the hours and days you spend in waiting for them grow heavy. Of all places of rest waiting rooms are the least rest-giving, because you have to put up with a leisure which is unmeaning and undesired. Lately I came to that state of mind when I could not afford to wait for the inspiration of ideas, so I surrendered myself to some work which was not capricious, but had its daily supply of coal to keep it running. However, this teaching work was not a monotonous piece of drudgery for me ; for, contrary to the usual practice, I treated my students as living organisms—and dealing with life can never be dull. Unfortunately, poets cannot be expected to enjoy lucid intervals for long, and directly some muse takes possession of their minds they become useless for all decent purposes of life. These are intellectual gypsies, vagrancy is in their blood, and already I feel the call of an irresponsible vagabondage, a kind of passion for an extravagant idleness. The schoolmaster in me is perilously near being lured away by the mischievous imps of truancy. I am going to move away from this place in a day or two, for the ostensible reason of visiting South India from where invitations have been pouring upon me for long, but I tell you in confidence, it is the lapse of reason, my frequent visitor, the spirit of losing way, who is beckoning me, ready to escort me over all lines of prescribed works. I long to discover some fairyland of holidays—not a Lotus Island—not a world where all week days are Sundays, but where Sundays are not at all needed, where all works carry their rest in themselves, where all duties look delightfully undutiful, like clouds bearing rain appearing perfectly inconsequential.

I am very much amused to see in your letter your vanity coming out when you describe your latest love adventure with a heroine of ten. But I feel sure you will turn green with envy when you learn my own achievement in that direction. My sweetheart is a girl of eleven and you will be amazed to know



her wonderful power of insight when I tell you of her discovery in me of the age 27, which remains permanent, perhaps to survive me when I am dead. All along I had a suspicion of this myself, but waited for corroboration from a fresh mind unsophisticated. But once for all the exploration has been done, and the flag of possession hoisted, and my lost continent of eternal 27 has been recovered and captured by a little girl of 11. Of all things for which I miss you so keenly this is one of the most important—for your rivalry would have greatly added to my triumph—because, I know, with all your obvious tokens of youthfulness you would have found it hard to produce your run-away 27 and lay your claim to youth which is at all reliable. You must admit that 27, when found reserved in a man bordering upon 60, needs no longer to be labelled that it will wash. I will refrain from giving you any detail description of this wonderful child, lest, in your jealousy, you should ascribe my impassioned speech to some dementia of infatuation. I hope Andrews will give you a truthful account of this episode in a more sober style than I can summon in my present state of mind. Your house is growing both in its girth and its height and is getting ready for any contingency that may take us by surprise, only hoping that I shall never be considered as a supernumerary third when the other two make up a company.

With love,

Affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan,*  
*Dec. 12, 1918.*

Dear Pearson,

I had been scheming for some time past to startle you with my sudden presence. But I find that my fate is against me ; in the first place, any secrecy with regards to my movements is impossible, so long as Andrews is your own

special correspondent ; secondly, just at present, things are very much like a bad dream in which with all your efforts you never reach your doors, never catch your trains, never find the person who can help you or the words with which you must approach him. Passports are still difficult to get and the passage is almost impossible to secure. So I am busy knocking my head against all the closed doors. The storm of war in Europe was terrible enough but the peace storm is going to be no less disconcerting and its first rush is not likely to be peaceful. Therefore, possibly, it would have been wiser for me to wait till the ghost of the late war is quieted. But my proposed movement, like most other present day movements, is mainly economic. Money is badly needed for a decent ordering of life both for myself, as well as, our ashram. I suppose you know that following a series of bad years we had a devastating flood in our Kaligram estate at the end of the last rainy season, which has left us, stranded on the crest of depletion from where we are hungrily looking out for prospects of new resources. Beggary is a profitable profession in our country under certain conditions, but my temperament and training are against me. Therefore my reliance is upon my books and I think if I can start at once and reach England in time to make arrangements for publishing some of my writings before the next spring it may be of help to us. In this matter my personal presence is of great consequence and I feel that it was rather unfortunate that, except *Gitanjali* and *Gardener*, all my writings were published while I was away from England and thus they never had the advantage of advice and help of my English friends. However, let me acknowledge this fact with cheerful resignation that though necessity is the mother of invention she will not invent steamers for me.

But be sure I shall interrupt you in your love-making to your infant sweethearts some time in the next summer. In the meanwhile I send you a sheaf of songs, some of which may be of use to you. The book has been printed in that press which we got from Lincoln. It is too small for regular printing

business, so, like that gift of a diamond stud to a man whose shirt was of a poor quality, it has necessitated further expenditure, far exceeding its own value, to give it complete fitness. It is needless to say that this book is not for the public. A dozen copies of this has been printed and the first copy goes to you carrying my message of love.

Your affectionate friend  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

There are errors enough in this book to prove that it is a genuine product of our press with নিমাই, বিষ্ণু and a few others for its compositors.

## REVIEWS

*BENGALI LITERATURE* : by Annadasankar and Lila Ray,  
( The P. E. N. Books : Indian Literatures ),  
The International Book House Ltd., Bombay.  
Price Rs. 2/-.

LEAVING aside the brief *Editor's Foreword*, written by Mrs. Sophia Wadia, the Hon. Secretary of the P. E. N. (Indian Branch), in which has been set forth the plan and purpose of the series, the present volume opens with a very illuminating introduction from Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee. In it, among other things, he explains the special function of literary handbooks and refutes the charge that the old literature of Bengal was meagre or insignificant.

The volume under review contains a brief but interesting descriptive account of Bengali literature. The division of periods is cogent and the presentation of material lucid ; we are impressed at once by the attractive and direct manner of expression. Without encumbering the mind with minor details the average reader will have a bird's-eye view, if sometimes a surface view, of the literary landscape. The authors admit in their foreword that the work does not "lay claim to scholarship", but as the main purpose of this series is to arouse literary interest, we cannot demand erudition or original research. We feel sure that non-Bengali readers will be led to explore the subject further after perusing this brochure.

We may perhaps be permitted to refer to a few points which the authors could check up, and after due consideration, clarify in the next edition. Slight alterations, where deviation has been made from facts, would, we believe, greatly add to the value of the book which deserves to be widely circulated.

For example, the statement in Chapter I that to the Buddhism of Pala times in Bengal, Tibet gave most of the gods and goddesses (p. 4.) has no historical support. There is, again, no evidence that Bengali Buddhists were at one time accustomed to divorce and beef-eating (p. 5). The authors' view that the Bengali Mussalmans have retained the original Prakrit speech with a minimum admixture of Sanskrit and Arabic words and that they have preserved the oldest folk-tales is not tenable. The testimony of Rev. Long (whose Descriptive Catalogue has been quoted in p. 48 ) on this point must have escaped the authors' notice. Of Mussulman Bengali literature before 1855 Long says : "The Mussalmans have formed in Bengal a kind of lingua franca, a mixture of Bengali and Urdu, called

Boatman's language. This must eventually give way to the overwhelming influence of Bengali but, in the meantime, as illustrative of the phase of mind of the people, is appended a list of the principal books in the dialect...They are chiefly translations from the Persian or Urdu." Conditions have much changed since Long wrote nearly ninety years ago. Muslims of Bengal have turned to their old Bengali heritage and our finest Muslim writers use the standard Bengali dialect without showing any excessive regard for Arabic or Sanskrit vocabulary. That is to say, Bengali literature, which has acquired its rich and characteristic language, is used in very much the same way by our creative writers whether Muslim or Hindu. The authors' observations regarding the position of the current literary dialect (as used by Rabindranath, by Pramatha Chaudhuri, and by the modern generation)—*chalit bhāṣā*—are not correct. The dialect based principally on the speech of the Bhagirathi valley is comparable to the standard French which also is not the native speech of all Frenchmen in different areas. The *chalit bhāṣā* of Bengal is maintaining a vigorous existence, and the old conservatism has not been able to oppose its swift and successful advance, which is due mainly to the fact that the entire prose writings of Rabindranath for more than two decades of his life, towards the end, were in *chalit bhāṣā*.

We are not sure what the authors mean by saying that the Bengalis were characterised by "insularity of outlook and feeling" and were "regarded as upstarts by the older aristocracy of the upper India" (p.10). Bengal is, we think, generally reputed as being "cosmopolitan" in her outlook, and has produced numerous gifted men who have enjoyed an all-India fame and denounced a narrow provincial outlook. The authors' view that Bengal as a whole "is the youngest part of India" is supported neither by geology nor by Indian historical tradition. The older aristocracy of Northern India surely held Bengal in high esteem. For, a passage in *Bhāṣa* (the predecessor of Kalidasa) clearly shows that ruling families of Bengal were regarded as equal to those of Northern India. The contention that the surnames of Bengali Hindu families will go to prove that their "cultural foundations are unmistakably Buddhist and Prakrit" (p. 9), is equally baseless. We may here refer the readers to the excellent study of Bengali surnames which appears in *Indian Linguistics* (A quarterly Bulletin of the Linguistics Society of India) Vol. VII, Pt. I, 1939.

There are a few more lapses regarding the comparatively earlier periods which should be rectified in a subsequent edition. Though all critical students of Bengali literary history know that the *Sri Krishna Kirtana* of the older Chandidas is the earliest work of the Vaishnava poetry

of Bengal, the authors have ignored this. It is a pity that a book written in Bankura, which has the glory of preserving that valuable literary treasure, should make this omission. The authors seem only to have heard of the later Chandidas whom they have misplaced in the 14th century.

Coming to nearer times, we must point out that Dinabandhu's play *Nildarpan* is not "as good from the artistic point of view as it was as propaganda". The play has unquestionable social importance and is deservedly famous for its documentary value but literary merit has not been attached to it by critics. The authors' remark that Maharshi Devendranath Tagore had "a leaning towards Sufism with a pronounced preference for the *Upanishads*" and that his spiritual life was nourished by "Christian contacts" does not reveal the Maharshi's spiritual personality in a correct perspective. His whole outlook was shaped and based on the *Upanishads* through which he gained his spiritual initiation, though he had deep love and devotion for Sufi poetry. As for his Christian contacts, historical truth demands it to be stated that, due to the unseemly zeal displayed by some missionary in baptising a minor son of one of his employees, and to other reasons, Devendranath throughout his long and important career as a religious preacher remained indifferent to Christianity. The reference to Rabindranath's religious outlook is also misleading. Though any one may take legitimate pride in being called a "devout Brahmo", this phrase would hardly be sufficient to characterise the very catholic and non-sectarian nature of Rabindranath's spiritual outlook. It was his uncompromising spirit of freedom which made him give up the function of acting as a priest even in the *Adi-Brahmo-Samaj* founded by his father, and this he did in spite of the opposition of his family. He could not subscribe to institutional religion or to any religious organisation, declaring himself to be a poet and a mystic whose religion was inspirational.

Two other points with regard to the chapter on Rabindranath, which is finely written and most impressive, might be raised here. The authors have done well in providing the essential aspects of the great poet's writings and in resisting the temptation to enter into the details of a supremely many-sided life which would baffle most chroniclers. It is a portrait in miniature that the authors have given, and they have revealed genuine artistry in their work. But to stop the story of Rabindranath's poetry with *Puravi* and not to mention that for well over twenty years more the poet continued to produce not only great poetry but some of his greatest, richest and most refreshingly original creations in verse is unjustifiable. In sheer technical brilliance and achievements, in new rhythms and forms, this period stands unmatched. As to subject matter, the poet

came nearer to the heart of humanity, to the sufferings and trials of the toiling millions than ever before. A certain lack of proportion is betrayed also by the inclusion of a foolish myth about an Indian exile in the U. S. A. who, it was rumoured, had desired to assassinate the poet. As far as is known, this mischievous lie was the creation of an interested party for hampering the poet who was then speaking to Americans about the *real* India. This fable need not have been introduced in a booklet which, in any case, had to observe strict and relevant limits of space.

(One minor point with regard to the translation of the name *Swapna-prayan* by Dwijendranath Tagore. "The Passing of a Dream" gives a wrong idea of the poem; it might have been better rendered as "The Dream-Journey".)

Most students of Bengali literature will regret that the authors have included the post-Rabindranath period only for the purpose of giving a list of names, chosen at random, interspersed with adjectives and passing judgment. The book could have ended with Rabindranath; the other course, space permitting, would demand some informative account of the new tendencies and experiments rather than an assortment of names. It is because an impressively written book is allowed to end in a weak manner that we feel compelled to add this comment.

Some points of difference and a few suggestions have been put forward in this article but, as we have stressed already, this book is eminently readable and will be really helpful to students of Bengali literature. The authors have made a pioneer attempt and given us much in a short survey; we should hope that their example will lead competent writers of our country to write on Bengali literature for readers outside Bengal. May we also hope that the authors of this book will give us another and a fuller account of our literature in which their rare competence in presenting the main landmarks and their vigorous gift of literary evaluation might find ampler scope?

MANMOHAN GHOSH.

### 30 MONTHS IN RUSSIA : By D. G. Tendulkar.

Karnatic Publishing House, Bombay.

Price Rs. 1/4/-.

THIS is a very readable little book on Russia by an Indian who visited that country in 1934 "as a raw young man at the age of twenty-six". Some of the impressions caught by his naked eye as well as some registered by his Leica Camera have been reproduced here. Naturally, very little is told in

these pages that has not been told at greater length by other tourists and writers at least a hundred times before. That is perhaps why the author did not care to publish his impressions earlier. But now that the U. S. S. R. is a respectable ally of the world's most respectable peoples and any book on "our brave ally" should sell like hot cakes, even among Anglo-Indian officials who once frothed and fumed at the mere mention of the word Bolshevik, it has become worthwhile to publish them. And rightly so. For most of such readers could not have read anything intelligent and unbiassed on Russia before, and this book will at least give them a fair, though meagre, account of life in a country on which they have learnt to look upon with sympathy. The book will therefore fill a real need. It is well written, in simple, racy English. The author, not being a communist, the book is happily unburdened with clumsy dialectics or abusive controversy. It is prefaced by two tributes to Lenin by Mahatma Gandhi and by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. One wonders, if Lenin were living today, would he have returned the tribute as one great man to another, or would he, like his astute and redoubtable successor, have maintained a discreet silence, exchanging birthday greetings only with heads of Capitalist States!

K. K.

*ALVAR SAINTS* ( Their lives and teachings ). By Swami  
Shuddhananda Bharati : (Publishers : Anbu Nilayam  
Ramachandrapuram, Trichy District, S. I.  
Pp. 145. Price Rs. 1/8/-)

THERE is a popular saying that *Bhakti* (Devotion to the Lord) was born in the Dravida. Though love of God is above all geographical boundaries, being in its very nature like the spirit "which bloweth where it listeth", yet, inasmuch as the South has been for centuries the home of the saints, —the saivites as well as the vaishnavites—, the proverb is true. The "Alvars", with whom the book under review deals, are of the latter school.

The Tamil term "Alvar", according to the author, means "one who has taken a deep plunge into the ocean of divine consciousness". The description is apposite for all the twelve alvars, mostly of mediaeval times, treated of here who had ultimately, by sheer dint of devotion, transcended the limits of their tribal deity. For, judging from the trend of those quoted in the volume, the refrain of their hymns, which are about four thousand in number and which have been collected in the scripture, *Divya Prabandam*, is ;

"He (God) is easy of attainment to His lovers. Love Him  
alone, O people that yearn for the freedom of bliss."

( And well might one add, also for the bliss of freedom ! )



That the sacred word, the transmission of which initiates the aspirants for the Path into the mysteries of the Truth of Love and of the Love of Truth, should not be a monopoly of any particular preceptor or pupil was the belief of Sri Ramanuja. For, when his teacher Nambi remonstrated with him for having made public the secret *mantra* and cursed him with the fire and brimstone of Hell, he answered back : "I shall gladly go to hell, my master, if the multitude can escape Hell by pronouncing the *mantra* of *mantras*."

*Alvar Saints* has opened ajar for those ignorant of Tamil the door leading into the heart of the Dravida, revealing once again that in the love of God "there is neither Gentile nor Jew".

G. M.

VASANTA VILASA : Edited by Kantilal B. Vyas, M. A.

( N. M. Tripathi & Co., Publishers, Bombay—2.

Pp. 90. Price Rs. 2/8/-).

VASANTA VILASA, as Jinavijaya Muniji, who contributes the Foreword, says, is one of the brightest gems of the old Gujarati literature. It is supposed to have been composed between 1400 to 1425 V. S. It is a love-poem in the form of a *phagu* ( derived from Sanskrit, *Phalgun* ) and deals with the sights and sounds and sports of springtime against the background of the separation of the lover and the beloved and their eventual re-union. The reader, while perusing the book, is often reminded of the strains and style of such classical works on the same subject in Sanskrit as *Kumara Sambhava*, *Sakuntala* and *Rtu Samhara* of Kalidasa.

The editor has now presented a critical edition of the well-known work. It is, without doubt, "a model of research", so thoroughly has he gathered and sifted his material. He has given the most authentic text along with variants from the other manuscripts. He has also discussed with great erudition and insight the questions of authorship, date of composition, form, phonology and morphology of the poem. Had he added a running translation into English of all the verses to his copious notes on them, the general reader's enjoyment would have been further enhanced. He deserves, indeed, the appreciation of eminent Gujarati scholars as also the thanks of all lovers of Gujarati poetry. Professor Vyas' manner of presentation of *Vasanta Vilasa* is, incidentally, an interesting study in the influence of Sanskrit classics in the sub-consciousness of the common people and its expression and adaptation in their poetry in their own mother-tongue.

The printing and get-up are of a high order.

G. M.

*SECRETS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE* : By Dr. Mohan Singh

[Available from S. Sher Singh, B-2, Kapurthala House,  
Lahore. Pp. 175. Price : Rs. 2/8/- ]

SOMEWHERE Emerson has said that all life is a continuous game of correspondences. Electron, molecule, living cell, plant, animal, man and all other planes of existence and evolution are parts of One whole. In other words, there is a brotherhood of reciprocal relatedness among them, none being isolated. Dr. Mohan Singh, through the irradiance of intuition, ( of course, if we accept his own statement that the book is "the product of his vision and not of intellection)" has traced this "cosmic correspondency" in the several spheres of human knowledge, particularly in the mythology of Hindu Religion, either by number, form, time, space, causation, name or by attribute.

The book is divided into two parts : the first is made up of 333 aphorisms, each a pin-point of pithy and profound thought, while the second has sixty-seven paragraphs of a general nature pertaining to the secrets of the science of Spiritual Life, which, according to the author, are "the secrets of science, art, labour, religion, history, duly re-integrated in ourselves." Here are three representative quotations :—

"God is both 'immensity' and a statue ; to wit, Siva, Mahasiva and Sivalingam."

"The world is X but X is infinitely repetitive, recurrent, and it is a decimal figure that is an appearance, a negative entity."

"A parable can be converted into a biography and a biography into a parable. They are inter-convertible. Time can be eternised in spiritual apprehension and eternity can be 'temporized' in spiritual life."

The *Secrets of Spiritual Life*, it must be admitted, makes rather heavy reading. Its abstruseness and esotericism are likely to repel the common reader, howsoever earnestly inclined he might be to know or feel the Reality that resides at the heart of the universe. For, what he desires is to tread the Path with a song on his lips and not with a splitting headache. But the philosophically-minded would simply rejoice at the intriguing interpretation the author has put on so many "faces and figures" in our mythology and racial or ratiocinating mind. With efficient editing the book could have been converted easily into a manual of daily devotional meditation.

*THE HOUND OF ULADH*: By James H. Cousins.

Published by Kalakshetra, Adyar, Madras.

Price Rs. 5/10/-

KALAKSHETRA, an International Art Centre at Adyar in Madras, is an interesting institution. Within a remarkably short time it has established its reputation as one of the foremost art centres in South India. Originally started with the idea of fostering a genuine interest in arts and art crafts only, it has of late taken up publication as one of its activities. One of their latest publications is *The Hound of Uladh* by James H. Cousins. An edition of collected poems by Mr. Cousins had already been published by Kalakshetra. The book had a wide circulation and that has encouraged the publishers to come forward with the present volume. The book under review contains two poetical dramas by Mr. Cousins : *The King's Wife* and *The Hound of Uladh*. The former one which was first published a few years ago is here reprinted for the third time. A poetical drama running into three editions in these days is a phenomenon by itself. The drama is based on the life of the recluse queen Mira Bai of Mewar, an exquisite creature who had tuned her life to the music of the Infinite. She lived in a world of her own created by her religious ecstasy. The dramatic element is supplied by the jealous husband Rana Kumbha who was of the earth, earthy and to whom the religion-intoxicated wife was nothing but a crank. Mr. Cousins has re-created this mediaeval Indian story for the English reading public with the consummate skill of a poet dramatist.

*The Hound of Uladh* is based on ancient Celtic mythology. True to his reputation as a well-known co-worker in the Irish literary and dramatic revival with AE and Yeats, Mr. Cousins has salvaged out an exquisitely fine play from the rich store of Celtic lore. The various legends which had grown round the Red Branch hero Cuchulain have been pieced together and given a cohesion by Mr. Cousins. His creative imagination has made out of Cuchulain a magnificent hero who figures as the saviour of his tribe. In this play we meet with the same tender symbolism and subdued pathos as we find in the plays of Yeats. The subtle blending of the intellectual and the spiritual in his approach to the theme and the verbal skill with which he handles his material throws a challenge to our doubt and mistrust about the justifiability of poetic drama in the present age.

Hirendranath Dutta.

*THE ART OF KATHAKALI* : By G. A. C. Pandeya.

Published by Kitabistan, Allahabad.

Price Rs. 5/4.

KITABISTAN of Allahabad has earned itself an enviable reputation as a publishing firm. Their publications cover a wide variety of interest. One of their most recent publications is *The Art of Kathakali* by G. A. C. Pandeya. The book is indeed a valuable contribution to the dance literature of India.

Kathakali is an ancient South Indian Dance system. To be more precise, however, Kerala in South India is the home of Kathakali. Like all other ancient Indian arts, Kathakali, too, fell into abeyance. It had practically died out, so that until very recently educated India was hardly aware of the existence of a Dance Drama of this kind. The credit of reviving the Kathakali Dance goes to Vallathole, a poet of Kerala who sometime in 1930 established in a Kerala village an art culture centre named 'Keralakala Mandalam'. Vallathole's novel venture attracted a good deal of notice. In 1931 the present reviewer was deputed by Rabindranath to visit that institution where he had the unique opportunity of making a special study of the Kathakali system. Since then Vallathole's institution has drawn artists from all over India. Strangely enough, before it was fully revived in India foreign artists were already interesting themselves in the Kathakali system. This would be evident from the fact that in 1926 a French magazine called *Journal Asiatic* published an elaborate article with profuse illustrations on this Dance Drama under the caption "Le Kathakali Du Malabar." This article again was only a French translation of an article originally written in English by a Russian named V. V. Radloff. The article which is of considerable length covering 284 pages is a comprehensive study of Kathakali in all its bearings, viz. its history, its literature, its music and make-up. In 1939 was published a book on the same subject named *Attakatha or Kathakali* by P. Krishnan Naiyar. The book was written in Malayalam and was published by the Madras University. It is curious to note, however, that the publishers of the book under review preface the book with the claim that "so far none has dealt with this subject in any language so elaborately—making it to rank as the first book on Kathakali literature, dance, and art." After what we have said above it would be for the reading public to judge how far that claim is tenable.

A careful perusal of the book, however, gives the impression that Mr. Pandeya is a keen student of our ancient Dance systems and he has

spared no pains to make the book an authoritative one. The book is extremely delightful reading and will interest even lay readers. Some of the chapters are really very good, particularly the one in which he discusses the technique of Kathakali. The two chapters on 'Mudras' are also well written. The appendix which contains chapters on the Kathakali stage and musical instruments is at once very interesting and informing.

The author has taken a lot of pains to establish the antiquity of Kathakali but in our opinion some other South Indian dance systems can claim to be as old as Kathakali. We do not think the Tamil dance Terukkuttu, Telegu Bithinatakam and Canarese Bayalatta are of later origin.

What has surprised us most, however, is that the author did not think it necessary to include chapters on Kathakali literature and its music — the Ragas and Raginis. Music is the very soul of this Dance Drama. The absence of these chapters constitute a serious defect of the book under review.

The illustrations of Uday Sankar's Ballet "Rhythm of life" seems to be out of place in this book. We would rather say that more profuse illustrations of Kathakali characters and costumes would add to the usefulness of the book.

Santidev Ghose.





## MRITYUNJAYA\*

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

FROM afar I thought  
You are invincible, merciless,  
the world trembles in fear of you.  
Awesome you are,  
your greedy flames  
consume the broken heart of misery.  
The trident in your right hand  
rises to the storm-clouds  
to draw the thunder down.

With my heart all a-tremble  
in fear I stood before you.  
At the sight of your scowling brow  
precipitate danger rose like a wave,  
and down came the blow.  
Pressing my hand against my trembling heart  
I asked :  
“Is there more to come,  
the very last of your thunderbolts ?”  
Down came the blow.

\* *Lit.* Conqueror or Lord of Death. It is also one of the epithets by which Śiva is known.

Translated by Kshitish Roy from the original Bengali poem in *Parishes*.



Just this and no more ?  
Gone was my fear.  
When aloft was held your thunderbolt,  
you seemed to me mightier than I.  
With your blow you came down  
to my own little world.  
You have become small  
and my diffidence is no more.  
However great you may be  
surely you are not mightier than death.  
That I am greater than death  
shall be my last word  
when I go away.



## HINDU-MUSSALMAN\*

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

It is raining heavily. My mind has made good its escape from the fold of recorded history, fenced round by the sign-posts of centuries. The primeval memories of the wild dance of wind and rain on the stage of the sky make my blood throb with the melody of *Megha-mallār*. My sense of duty has been washed away as in a deluge, and I feel myself as one of that row of trees—the *sāl*, *tāl*, *mohua* and *chhātīm*. They are the aristocrats of the kingdom of life; they have been enjoying fully their heritage of sun and rain from time immemorial. They are not upstarts of time as human beings are, and hence they are eternally young. Of the race of *homo sapiens* the poets alone have not, through extravagance of culture, squandered away their age-old heritage. That is why these aristocrats of the vegetable kingdom do not look down upon the poets as mere men. That is why, year after year, the rains make me so restless, they call to me to snap all the bonds of responsibility and come away to the Playhouse of Life.

There is a child in each one of us; he is the most ancient of our predecessors and he takes unlawful possession of my work-room. That is why I am trying to vie with the wind and the rain, with the trees and the shrubs, leaving my work alone, composing songs. Thus I am, at the present moment, the least human of human beings and my heart is quivering like a blade of grass, shimmering like fresh leaves. Probably Kalidasa had something like this in mind when he wrote: "Even happy people become otherwise disposed when the clouds appear..." By "otherwise" he perhaps meant what may be described as

\*A letter addressed to Dr. Kalidas Nag (then at the University of Paris) written some time in the last week of June 1922 (Āshāḍ 7, 1829 B. S.). Originally published in *Santiniketan* (monthly) Śrāvana 1829; later included in *Kālāntar* (Vaiśākh, 1844). Translated into English by Kshitish Roy.—Ed.

other than humanly inclined. This other-than-humanly feeling carries us away to those dim days when Life was at play, when Mind, the schoolmaster, had not appeared, when the forbidding pillars of the school were not yet and the butterflies flitted freely from flower to flower.

As I write to you I find the afternoon sky overcast with heavy clouds ; the rain-laden wind wanders about the fields singing and piping, and the restless little runnels break into thoughtless giggling laughter like school girls on a holiday. It is the seventh day of *Āshāḍ* and the *Ambubāchi* period has just begun. The name *Ambubāchi* ( Speech of the rains ) justifies itself ; all Nature seems to be garrulous with the ceaseless prattle of rain. Under the canopy of heavy clouds there is Nature's musical soirée ; the grasshoppers, those leafy vocalists, are present on invitation and they have been joined by the ardent band of frogs. Do not run away with the idea that I have no seat amongst them. I would not allow the call of the seasons go unanswered. Like clouds following one after the other, my songs also come in succession, day after day. My songs are light, inconsequential things, unburdened with any meaning or purpose, made, like the clouds, of such aimless ingredients ( as Kalidasa puts it ) as fire and fume, water and wind.

As I was setting tune to a new song, singing all to myself, sitting at the window :

*My mind is tuned to the melody of fresh clouds  
And my thoughts are listless for no reason...*

the question came from you, from across the seas : "What is the solution of the Hindu-Muslim tangle in India ?" I was suddenly reminded of the fact that I too have my duties towards society. It will not suffice giving mere tuneful answers to the rumbling clouds ; I shall have to think out answers to the thundering questions of human history. So I must needs leave my seat in the musical soirée and face the problem that you have set before me.

Among all the religious communities in the world today, there are two that are in strong opposition to other religious creeds. Christianity and Islam are not satisfied with preaching their own faiths ; they are ever ready to oppose other faiths. To be converted to their religion is about the only way of collaborating with them. One point in favour of the Christians, however, is that they are the forerunners of the modern age ; their minds are not so much confined within medieval folds ; they do not allow the whole of their life to be completely circumscribed by their religious creed and hence they do not offer extreme opposition to other faiths. "European" and "Christian" are not synonymous terms and there is no inherent conflict in such expressions as an European-Buddhist or an European-Mussalman. But when a whole nation like the Muslims is characterised by the creed it professes, its chief criterion is religion. "Mussalman-Buddhist" and "Mussalman-Christian" are contradictions in terms.

On the other hand, the Hindus are somewhat similar to the Mussalmans in this respect. They too are completely entrenched in their own faith. Only they are not as actively opposed to other religions, with regard to which the Hindu attitude is that of non-violent non-cooperation. In the case of a Hindu, his religion being based on birth and observances, the barriers are stronger. One may mix on equal terms with Mussalmans after one embraces their faith, but even such a possibility is remote and severely restricted within the folds of Hinduism. Mussalmans do not reject others by refusing or prohibiting social contacts, but the Hindus do. That is why the Hindus could never draw their Mussalman brethren as close to themselves as the Mussalmans did draw the Hindus in their mosques and elsewhere,— specially during the Khilafat movement. Social contact bridges the gulf between one man and another, one community and another. It is here that the Hindus have segregated themselves by raising one wall after another. When I first took up the work of managing our Estate, I observed

that a Mussalman ryot having business in the Estate office would be offered a seat on the bare floor and not on the carpet. There cannot be a more serious obstacle to human solidarity than this practice of looking down on people, professing religions other than one's own, as impure and untouchable. It is very unfortunate that in India Hindus and Mussalmans live side by side but have not come together. It is not his religion proper but only his social observances that accentuate the exclusiveness of the Hindu. In the case of the Mussalman it is the other way round ; socially he is liberal but his creed is his greatest barrier.

Thus each of them has a door open somewhere but not for the benefit of the other. How will they unite ? There was a time when India served as a common meeting-ground for a free union of such a variety of races as the Greeks, Iranians, Huns, etc. But remember, that happened long before the "Hindu" epoch, which was an age of reaction and when conscious attempts were made to strengthen the fabric of Brahmanism. Ritualistic walls were reared up to unscalable heights, practically making all intrusions impossible. The Hindus forgot that any living organism, kept hermetically sealed, is sure to suffocate and die. However that may be, the fact remains that at the end of the Buddhist age, the Indians swelled their ranks by enlisting the help of such quasi-foreign races as the Rajputs already settled, and made assiduous attempts to protect themselves against outside contacts and influences. In this way they raised the formidable wall of a religion whose very essence was prohibition and refusal. Perhaps nowhere in the world so dexterous a barrier was ever erected to close all possible channels of human relations.

It will be a mistake, however, to suppose that this barrier exists as between Hindus and Mussalmans alone. You and I and such of us as would like freely to order our social conduct ourselves, find that we too are not only left out but are even actively hindered. Herein lies the complexity of the problem. The solution may come only with a change of heart or with

the change of time. Europe emerged into the life of modern age out of the darkness of medievalism only with the extension of her knowledge and with a devoted pursuit of truth. In the same way our two communities, Hindus and Mussalmans, have to break away from the limitations and march ahead. If the whole race is buried under the tomb of the burden of the past, there cannot be any progress, and human unity will remain an impossible dream. The barriers and inhibitions are inherent in our present mental make-up. These we must shake off before we can hope to attain freedom in any sphere of life. Such a radical change can come only with true education and spiritual discipline. We must discard such worn-out conventions as teach us to hug the cage and forget the wings. And then and then only we shall attain real well-being (*Kalyāna*) for all. Hindu-Muslim amity waits for the fullness of time. This need not cause us despair, however, for there are instances in history of how human endeavour has succeeded in ushering the age of the great Revolution—from the age of the chrysalis to that of the glorious wings. We should also be able to do the same, to lift the siege from our mind. If we do not, nothing can help us, for there is no other path to salvation.

## IN THE HIMALAYAS

By RATHINDRANATH TAGORE

ONE Sunday morning, a year before the last great war, an advertisement for the sale of a property in the Nainital hills attracted my notice. It included a cottage and a ready-made orchard with apples, pears, peaches and what not. Who can resist the temptation? The same evening found me and my brother-in-law on the Dehra Dun Express. With the help of two ponies and a guide the property was located and was purchased on the spot. Perched high up about 7000 ft. on the Ramgarh range of hills, with a magnificent view of the snows and a deep forest of pines and enormous oak trees hoary with age, what could be more desirable as a summer resort? The property had a commonplace name: "Snowview". Father re-named it HAIMANTI.

The next summer ( 1914 ) the whole family gathered there. Many others also turned up afterwards — a regular house-warming party. My sister was there with her baby; Atul Chandra Sen, the poet, came up from Lucknow to spend a few days and Charlie Andrews arrived one day from Delhi, having given up his connection with St. Stephen's College to settle down at Santiniketan. I went away for a month on a hiking excursion to Badrinath with a party gathered from the Asrama, including Dinendranath, Sudhakanta Roy, Narabhup Roy, Mukul De and Nepal Chandra Roy. On our return from this famous pilgrimage on the Tibetan frontier, we found the house at HAIMANTI already full and everybody in a festive mood. The orchard was contributing to it by its abundant supply of strawberries, cherries, apricots, etc., and all sorts of fresh vegetables. Father had laid aside other work and was daily composing new songs. Dinendranath, whom he later called the treasurer of his songs, being ready at

hand, he felt encouraged by the assurance that there was no danger of the tunes getting forgotten and lost. It is common knowledge that he never relied in his later years on his own memory for remembering songs. As soon as he had composed one, he would send for Dinendranath, and if he was not available, Rama Kar, Amita Sen, Santidev Ghosh and such others as could be relied upon to pick up the tune quickly and keep it safely stored in memory.

There was a niche, which could hardly be called a cave, on the slope of a rock near the house where some seats had been improvised. After breakfast every morning, father used to sit there and most of us gathered round him to hear him sing the new songs. The cave faced the north and the whole range of the snowy peaks, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Nandagiri, Panchachuli and such giants was spread out before us. The steep slope immediately below our feet ran down in zigzag curves, with terraces growing fruit trees in between copses of deodars and chestnuts breaking the descent, until it dipped precipitately into deep gorges with mountain torrents flowing through them. Behind us rose a bank covered with dense forest, a paradise for botanists and seekers after rare varieties of orchids. In such surroundings one bright morning with the sun's rays sending sparkles of brilliant hues over the tree tops, father sang to us

*Ei to bhālō legechhilō ālōr nāchan pātāy pātāy.*<sup>1</sup>

We all sat spell-bound. Atul Sen made him repeat the song several times until the words, the music, the sunlight and the landscape blended into one harmonious whole, unbearably beautiful. Very often father made Atul Sen sing his own compositions. We specially enjoyed some of his *kirtans*; his voice could render the delicate modulations with great mellowness and charm. When both of them got tired, Dinendranath would carry on until we were summoned for the midday meal.

Humorous incidents were not altogether lacking. We had

1. "This dance of light on every leaf had been my delight." *Gita Pañchāśikā*



been told by Charlie Andrews that Ramgarh was a favourite haunt of Lord Meston. Big game abounds in these hills and he came here quite often with *shikar* parties. This greatly excited the boy-artist Mukul De and he begged of me to take him out to shoot tigers and bears. I refused to hazard any such foolish adventure and told him that there were no proper guns or rifles to be had. I thought that would kill his ardour. But one early morning he woke me up saying that he had secured a gun and also a guide and we must go at once. The whole day we wandered up and down through the forests and tried to follow trails apparently of wild animals, but fortunately none came our way. Disappointed, the three of us sat down, leaning against the trunk of a spreading oak not far from our cottage. The inveterate Mukul began to plan for another foray, this time with plenty of guns and beaters, *a la* Lord Meston. All of a sudden there was a scrambling noise above our heads and a very much enlarged and very much alive edition of a Teddy Bear swung down from the branches and stood in front of us looking straight into our eyes. I heard a subdued moan from somebody behind me. I dared not shoot, for I had long ago discovered that Mukul had provided me with an ancient muzzle-loading musket that was probably a relic of the days of the Mutiny. Fortunately nothing happened. The bear was obviously just as surprised in being discovered as we were and disappeared quietly with, I believe, a sardonic smile on its face at our discomfiture. Mukul De never again mentioned big game during the rest of his stay at Ramgarh.

Father always had his chest of homœopathic medicines with him. We found one of the carpenters, who came to do repair work, suffering from St. Vitus's dance—a peculiar nervous disease. Not really believing that it would have any effect, as the man said he had had the disease from his childhood, father gave him a dose of *causticum*. In a week he came back cured. After that father had no lack of patients. Every morning a crowd would gather having walked long distances from remote villages for treatment. There were even surgical cases. We afterwards

learned that the local postmaster also had a hand in this. Finding letters addressed to *Dr. Tagore*, he had spread the news of the arrival of a famous medicine-man and, coupled with the lucky cure that father had effectedd on the carpenter, all those who had any physical complaints flocked to HAIMANTI.

I still wonder how Charlie Andrews fitted into this life at HAIMANTI. His restless soul must have found this sort of quiet, inactive life very irksome. Although not young, he was still in robust health and possessed of unusual enthusiasm and vigour. Social life was limited within our own small group assembled at HAIMANTI. We were quite isolated in this mountain retreat. As neighbours we had only one Anglo-Indian family and an English couple, both living some distance away from our place. Mr. Sweetenham, the Englishman, was a retired I.C.S. officer who had one of the most up-to-date apple orchards in this region. Once we were invited to tea at his house which he had built on the highest point of the Ramgarh range. By a fortunate accident, the Sweetenhams had selected an afternoon which provided the most wonderful reception and entertainment for father. A glorious sunset, unforgettable for its beauty, awaited him. While we were lounging on the verandah the landscape was suddenly blotted out by a vast sea of clouds, leaving only the peaks of a few neighbouring hills jutting out like isolated islands. And when the brilliant and ever-changing colours of the sunset spread over this endless banks of clouds and tinged the soft green of the island peaks with the delicate shades of pink and purple, we indeed felt that we had been enchanted away to a fairyland. Father had been talking about the war with Mr. Sweetenham and Mr. Andrews, but the conversation was dropped and all of us stood outside and admired the scene. Only once before I had experienced such a rare sight and that was from the heights of Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps.

The war had greatly depressed father. He had seen it coming and had written the prophetic poems : *Ebār je oi elō*

*sarvaneśe go* and *Tōmār śankha dbulāv paḍe*<sup>1</sup> before the hostilities had actually broken out. This time he felt that all the moral principles in which he believed were being ruthlessly sacrificed to the demon of brute force, with the primitive instincts proclaiming with a loud voice their victory over the civilised code of life built up painfully through many ages. I believe that it was as a reaction to this feeling that he devoted himself to writing poems and composing songs. And HAIMANTI provided him with the right atmosphere.<sup>2</sup>

Father must have felt he should give some congenial occupation to Charlie Andrews to make his stay interesting. He asked him to select and arrange his latest English translations for publication. This made Charlie Andrews very happy. The whole day he would busy himself in arranging and re-arranging the order of the poems. I am not quite sure if this selection of poems was not the one that appeared later as *Fruit Gathering*. In the evenings when we would gather round the fire-place, Charlie Andrews would make father read out choice poems from his English works. He himself would sit close to father and when any poem would especially move him—and this happened quite often—a characteristic smile would spread all over his face and he would hold father tightly with his arms round his shoulders.

But this kind of literary occupation could not satisfy Uncle Charlie very long. ( We had by then started to call him

1. "Now comes the holocaust" ( 19 May 1914 ) ; "The trumpet lies in the dust" ( 26 May 1914 ) ; see *Fruit-Gathering*. For originals see *Balākā*.

2. It is interesting to compare Mr. C. F. Andrews' impression of this same period : "The period of the next few months was one of increased tension, followed later by a gradual recovery from the mental strain that had been oppressing the Poet for so long. "At the beginning of the European War this strain had become almost unbearable, owing both to the world tragedy of the war itself and the suffering of Belgium, which the Poet felt most acutely. He wrote and published simultaneously in India and England three poems which expressed the inner conflict going on in his own mind. The first of these was called *The Boatman*, and he told me, when he had written it, that the woman in the silent courtyard, "who sits in the dust and waits," represented Belgium. The most famous of the three poems was *The Trumpet*. The third poem was named *The Oarsmen*. Its outlook is beyond the war ; for it reveals the daring venture of faith that would be needed by humanity if the old world with its dead things were to be left behind and the vast uncharted and tempestuous seas were to be essayed leading to a world that was new." C. F. Andrews : *Letters to a Friend*, Chap. II ( Allen and Unwin ).

*Uncle*. It was actually Dinendranath who started it at Ramgarh but soon after he became *Uncle* to everyone in the asrama and remained so even when he came to be called Deenabandhu by the public. ) As I was saying, Uncle Charlie soon got tired of the quiet life at Ramgarh and sought to escape from it by fixing a lecture engagement for father at Lucknow. We did not quite like it, for fear it would break up the party too soon. But Uncle Charlie was not to be resisted. We began to pack up. As it happened, enough *dundees* ( the only means of conveyance in the place ) could not turn up on the date fixed. We wanted that father and Uncle Charlie should take two of the *dundees* with a full complement of bearers. But Uncle Charlie would not hear of it and after sending father off in a *dundee* started to walk on foot himself. My wife rode a pony and I had to carry my little nephew Nitu on my shoulders. We gave them a start and managed to follow as well as we could.

Ramgarh is more than sixteen miles from the nearest railway terminus—Kathgodam. The only place of any importance in between is Bhimtal with its beautiful lake. When we reached there we found father nursing his feet. We gathered that on finding Uncle Charlie walking behind, father had discarded the *dundee* and both of them had walked all the distance together. In spite of Uncle Charlie's protests, father continued the journey to Kathgodam on foot with a retinue of an empty *dundee* and a dozen bearers following behind.

Our own slow progress beyond Bhimtal made us miss the train in which the two friends travelled to Lucknow. We returned straight to Santiniketan. When Uncle Charlie brought father back to the Asrama he heaved a sigh of relief. He had a sorry story to tell. On missing us at Lucknow, poor Uncle Charlie had to spend most of his time running to the station sending frantic telegrams all along the line for our whereabouts. Besides, he had also discovered, at some cost to himself, that it was not easy to manage a poet. We could not help feeling sorry for this misadventure of Uncle Charlie's.

# AN IRIDESCENT INSTITUTION OF ISLAMIC INDIA

By I. C. BHATNAGAR

MONASTICISM was forbidden by Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. It is related in the traditions that Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn came to the Prophet with the request that he might retire from society and become a monk. The Prophet replied : "The retirement which becomes my people is to sit in the corner of a mosque and wait for the time of Prayer." <sup>1</sup> In spite of this interdiction, this iridescent institution thrived in all those countries, where the armies of Islam penetrated.

"The rise of Islam is one of the marvels of History." In A. D. 622, a prophet fled from his native town Mecca, to seek an asylum in the town of Yathrib, later known as Madīnat-un-Nabi or "The Prophet's City". About a century later the followers of this very prophet were holding sway over an Empire, which extended from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Caspian to the cataracts of the Nile. It included Spain and Portugal, southern France, northern coast of Africa, Upper and Lower Egypt, Arabia—the cradle of their creed—, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Transoxiana. In their zeal for conversion and propagation of this newly established faith, they overran Christian Europe. Thrice did they besiege Constantinople. They carried their victorious arms into the heart of France. But for the sanguine victory of Theodosius III before the imperial city in 716 and the shattering blow inflicted upon them near Tours in 732 by Charles the Hammer, the whole of Europe would have fallen a prey to their thralldom. The bloody battle of Poitiers decided whether the mosque or the church should be the place of congregations in Rome, Paris, and

1. *Vide The Mishkāt, Book, IV, Chap. 8.*

London. This early impact of Islam on Christianity might have engrafted iridescent monasticism in its various forms.

By the eighth century of the Christian Era the Arabs had carried their arms to the western confines of India. Before the Muslim invasion of India, Vedic customs and religion had received reprehension at the hands of the two great reformers, Mahāvīra and Gautam Buddha. With the inception of Islamic ideals in India, her original inhabitants were led to establish contact with a civilisation and culture which was an antithesis of their own antique creed and theology. "Seldom in the history of Mankind," observes Sir John Marshall, "has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Muhammadan and Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergences in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive."

The Indian Middle Age had already been imbued with the spirit of divine love and devotion, when Islam's political power and spiritual culture dawned over the country from the western horizon. The victorious invaders dyed the conquered country blood-red with the sword, acting together under the inspiration of a living ideal. This irate shock, charged with aggressive monotheism and staunch faith, aroused the slumbering indigenous soul. To conquer the heart of Indian people, Sufis and mystics of Islam entered the land in the train of the victors. They preached "By Love serve one another" and filled the gloomy atmosphere with devotional music and divine love. Their role in Indian History is as important as that of the monarchs. It is a pity that the yeoman's service performed by these savant-saints has remained a latent labyrinth to the student of Indian History.

The physical features of India have been the most potent factor in deciding that the Punjab and Sind were to be the earliest provinces, where the mystics preached. As for their track of

approach to these parts, it could have been none other than the well-known north-western passage to India.

Manṣūr-al-Hallāj, born in the middle of the ninth century ( in A. H. 244 = A. D. 858 ) visited India. Another pioneer Sufi in India was Shaikh Ali al-Hujwiri, better known as Data-ganj Bakhsh. He was an inhabitant of Jullab near Ghazna. He had travelled far and wide in the Islamic Empire from Syria to Turkistan and from the Caspian Sea to India. Finally he came to India and settled at Lahore to diffuse his spiritual knowledge. Here he died in A. D. 1072 and his tomb stands near the Bhati Gate of Lahore. According to local tradition he is believed to be the first mystic preceptor in India. The prince of Persian mystic poets Sā'di of Shirāz visited India in A. D. 1234 and had a remarkable adventure in a temple at Somnath. Earlier in A. D. 1192 after the Battle of Traori, Sultan Mu'izzud-Dīn Muhammad-Ibn Sām Ghori reduced the fortresses of Sarsuti and Hansi and thence proceeded to Ajmer. Hazrat Khwājah Mu'inud-Dīn Hasan Chishtī was with him. This mystic, a son of Ghiyāth-ud-din Hasan was born in A. D. 1142 in the village of Sijz of the province of Sijistan. He fixed his residence at Ajmer and built a monastery for the propagation of mysticism. To this day the colossal building stands on the hill and his tomb within is a place of pilgrimage where thousands resort. Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya, whose mausoleum stands near Delhi, preached a religion of love, which touched the hearts of all. Alike the rich and the poor flocked to him for guidance and bowed their heads in reverence to him.

Glancing through the entire length of history, we observe that the motive principle which actuated the mystics was a desire for union with God. As seekers of God, they renounced the worldly riches and the pleasures of the flesh and entered the seclusion and peace of the monasteries to meditate and pray. They set themselves to solve the spiritual problem of the realization of "Divine Truth" under the guidance of their religious preceptor. Arberry versifying their aim writes :

*Their every purpose is with God united,  
Their high ambitions mount to Him alone.  
Their troth is to the Lord and Master plighted,  
O, Noble quest, for the Eternal One.*

Like Martin Luther, the mystics adored spiritual music. The Christian reformer states : "Next to theology I give to music the highest place and honour ; and we see how David and all the saints have wrought their godly thoughts into verse, rhyme and song." According to some of the Sufis, music was the art of the prophets, and they looked upon it as one which could calm the agitations of the soul. Although it cannot be asserted that all the hospices of those times reverberated with sufic melody, yet on the basis of evidence afforded by contemporary documents we have to conclude that it was much in vogue. The Qawwāls, as the spiritual singers were termed, recited mystic hymns in the congregations of the Shaikhs and their disciples in the monasteries. It appears that these Qawwāls were issued permits for singing by the presiding preceptors of the monasteries. In some of these hospices the singers were paid artists and performed daily.

In addition to Persian poems and odes, Hindi songs were also prevalent. These ecstatic songs overflowed with the Unity of God, His Omnipresence, exhortation for the abnegation of the material world, admonition for the sins committed and, last but not least, the longing of the human soul to be immersed in the original "Ocean of Eternal Bliss". The mystic symphony set aflame in the hearts of the audience a divine love of God and an unquenchable craving to be united with Him. Impressed with the shortness of the human life, they determined to curb their passions and desires for this transitional world. They became conscious of their shortcomings. The world and her diadems appeared a hallucination and an illusion to them. Such was the entrancing effect of this monastic mystic music, for

*There is no truer truth obtainable  
By man than comes of music. ( ROBERT BROWNING )*



In the opinion of Mrs. Child, "Music is an invisible dance, as dancing is silent Music." This enrapturing sufic music transformed itself into dance in the hospices of the Islamic Medieval and Mughal India. Dealing with the attributes of God and Divine Love, it made the hearers cognisant of His latent Omnipresence. Overcome with bliss and delight they danced with the music. At times some of them, moved to a high pitch, gave up their lives.

The Medieval and Mughal epochs in India were marked with wide-spread belief in magic, miracles, charms, enchantments, sorcery and witchcraft. Disease and sickness were attributed to the damaging influence of evil spirits and goblins. To counteract their harm the saints and shaikhs used to write charms which the patient was required to wear either round the neck or on the arm. In certain special cases the religious preceptors delegated the power of writing charms to a chosen disciple and gave him permission to distribute these to the poor and the needy gratis.

Babur in his Memoirs tells us that as a result of the enchantment exercised by two persons, who were called upon to do so, rain and storm came. Later we have the testimony of Niccolao Manucci, who writes, "Here two things happened to me that I wish to recount, so that inquiring persons may learn that these people are much given to sorcery." He relates how the Raja of Chiutia took a fancy to a handsome horse, which Raja Jai Singh had given to the foreign traveller and requested him to sell the horse. Manucci refused to part with it ; but, he says, "When it was time for my departure the horse had lost the use of its legs, and was unable to move" through magic. The other incident is also of the same nature. "One of my servants," he writes, "passing through a field of radishes, stretched out his hand to pluck one out of the ground, when his hand adhered in such a fashion to the radish that he could not take it away." The owner of the field was approached and beseeched to liberate the servant. He charged a fine and after beating the servant recited some words

and the servant regained his freedom. He further says, "Not only was I famed as a doctor, but it was rumoured that I possessed the power of expelling demons from the bodies of the possessed."

Almost all the advanced mystics and saints were believed to be able to perform miracles. In the opinion of Abu Mañşūr, working of wonders by saints is possible. They establish them in the regard of their followers, just as the miracles of the prophets are accepted as evidence of their superhuman status.

Admittedly man's religious ideals, social standards and political ideas evolve with the change of times and environment. A sincere student of history must shake off all prejudices for or against this iridescent institution of Islamic India which acted as a healing balm to thousands who, overcome with the sorrow and pain of the material life, found sanctuary in the mystic hospices. The study of the evolution and effervescence of mysticism-cum-monasticism as yet remains a cul-de-sac. Research on this topic would throw new sidelights on the historical background of the Medieval and Mughal periods of Indian History.

The late Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has expressed his transcendental opinion about this forlorn chapter of Indian History in the following terms : "We still expect to see at some future date a detailed history of its progressive movement. Unless we have this history, the true picture of India will remain only partially known to her children and such a partial knowledge might be very erroneous."

# GENIUS AND FREEDOM OF MIND

## IN SCHOPENHAUER'S AND SPINOZA'S TEACHINGS

By Prof. BALDOON DHINGRA

By genius Schopenhauer means preferably, if not exclusively, artistic genius, and neglects philosophical and practical genius. After having defined genius as the most perfect objectivity, he says : "Thus genius is the faculty of continuing in the state of pure perception, of losing oneself in perception, and of enlisting in this service the knowledge which originally existed only for the service of the"—selfish—"will ; that is to say, genius is the power of leaving one's own interests, wishes, and aims entirely out of sight, thus of entirely renouncing one's own personality for a time, so as to remain *pure knowing subject*, clear vision of the world ; and this not merely at moments, but for a sufficient length of time, and with sufficient consciousness, to enable one to reproduce by deliberate art what has thus been apprehended, and 'to fix in lasting thoughts the wavering images that float before the mind.'"<sup>1</sup>

This applies especially to artistic genius. Schopenhauer's own words, however, have a wider bearing. He says further : "It is as if, when genius appears in an individual, a far larger measure of the power of knowledge falls to his lot than is necessary for the service of an individual will ; and this superfluity of knowledge, being free, now becomes subject purified from will, a clear mirror of the inner nature of the world."<sup>2</sup>

These words point to more than artistic genius alone, for he whose mind becomes a clear mirror of the inner nature of the world is not necessarily bound to be an artist and to

1. *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. 1, p. 240.

2. *Ibid.*

translate his inspired objective perception into colour or sound ; he may just as well produce his intuitions in abstract ideas, he may be a man of science, a great investigator and philosophical genius not only of sensation, but also of thought, and when it becomes the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world, then this nature may be reflected in the mind not only in sensation, but also, and indeed under certain circumstances preferably, in the mode of thinking. When this reflection is fixed and reproduced, it results, in the first case, in a work of art, and in the second, in a system of abstract thoughts, in a large and comprehensive idea.

But we can go still further and say that the mind is not only capable of sensation and thought, but that it also has strivings and desires which aim at bringing about certain changes in the outer world, at producing definite actions, and these strivings and desires will likewise be in the closest connection with the way in which the world is reflected in the mind. If the surface of the mental mirror be dim and soiled, cracked and full of flaws, not only will all that which finds entrance through sensation be distorted and full of defects, not only will the thought be untrue and one-sided, but also the strivings and desires which determine the actions will be impure and base.

Schopenhauer himself has treated genius or objectivity of aspiration and desire in detail in the Fourth Book entitled "The Assertion and Denial of the Will"<sup>8</sup> ; only he imparts a want of clearness to the subject by speaking of a denial of the will in general, instead of confining his remarks to a denial of the subjectively interested, selfish will. What Schopenhauer calls the Denial of the Will is nothing but a change of direction of the will. The will in itself, as a force, as an energy, is indestructible ; its aim alone may be changed, and it is exactly the nature of this aim that distinguishes the man of genius from the narrow-minded man. The object of the latter's will is his own small person, whereas in proportion to the growth of genius in a man, there

is a corresponding increase in the importance and scope of the object or aim at which the will is directed, till, on reaching the highest stage it embraces all that exists, the universe.

The will that is concerned merely with one's self is called self-seeking, the will whose aim rises above one's self is called love. What Schopenhauer calls denial of will may more correctly be termed denial of self-seeking ; but the denial of self-seeking is at the same time the assertion of love, that is, the assertion of the will that has an aim rising above one's own small person. Thus Schopenhauer's denial of the will is at the same time an assertion of the will.

Schopenhauer's expression is therefore misleading and must be replaced by a more exact term which will at the same time remove the apparent contradiction contained in Schopenhauer's own dicta. For whereas, in various sections of his work, he treats very minutely of the negation and suppression of the will, he himself declares repeatedly and expressly that the will as an original force and energy can never be suppressed and destroyed. According to him the will is the thing-in-itself, that is, the real essence, the nucleus of all things, and consequently indestructible. The forms in which it is manifested, embodied or, as he expresses it, objectified can shift and change, but the will itself as the original force, as the thing-in-itself, as an actual existence and reality, continues to exist to all eternity. Schopenhauer says : "The will, as the thing-in-itself, constitutes, the inner, true, and indestructible nature of man."<sup>4</sup>

Inasmuch too as Schopenhauer puts all natural forces on the same plane as that which we recognise in ourselves as force, energy, or will, he acknowledges the indestructibility of the will ; for according to the law of the conservation of energy, there only exist changes in the form, in the mode of operation of forces, but never a destruction or annihilation of the force itself.

If, therefore, Schopenhauer says that "the nature of genius consists in pre-eminent capacity for pure contemplation," and

that "this requires that a man should entirely forget himself,"<sup>5</sup> we must not allow ourselves to be misled into considering genius as something inactive, as a mental state without energy or will in which the mind passively submits to whatever may happen. That would be an absolute mistake : for genius is not weakness, not mere passivity, but the highest energy, the highest concentration of power, the most pronounced activity, and therefore the highest form of the will to live. But if the whole power of the mind is fixed on one point, if one's whole energy is developed in one direction, and the will to live assumes one particular form of existence, naturally other forms of existence are neglected, or at least temporarily disdained, and then no energy is left over for other aims and no power remains to be applied in other directions. Thus the mistake may easily arise that no volition or power is thought to be present, where in reality the most intensive will holds sway.

Let us imagine a lover of music listening to one of Beethoven's Symphonies. Is his mental condition purely passive? Are his will and energy entirely suspended because he feels no desire for any particular thing as a dog does for a bone or a child for an apple? The enthusiastic lover of Beethoven's music shows himself devoid of will and energy in other directions, only because his whole will, his entire energy, is concentrated on one particular point, on listening to the music. As long as the sounds float around him, he is all ear, all sensation, and has, therefore, no relish or interest for other things. He lives in the process of hearing, his will to live assumes the form of the sensation of hearing. Thus we know of people whose whole life is absorbed in music, who, as they themselves express it, live only in music. To speak, in this connection, of a denial of the will to live is an abuse of terms, for here there is no denial of the will to live, but only certain other forms of existence are neglected in favour of one particular form that is now adopted and realised with all possible energy.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 240.

That the vital energy rises at one point, when it is lowered at another, is familiar to every one in numerous instances. The man who has lost the power of sight, acquires an exceedingly fine sense of hearing and touch instead. The energy, which had previously been claimed by his sight, is now divided between his two other chief senses, and results in their more acute development. A shrub, pruned at the top, grows all the more vigorously at the sides, and thus there is everywhere compensation and equalisation, so that no force or energy is ever lost, but only assumes new forms.

That by genius or objectivity of sensation, thought, and volition no passive condition devoid of will and energy can be meant, is shown by Schopenhauer's own words. After having stated that "the superfluity of knowledge, being free, now becomes subject purified from will, a clear mirror of the inner nature of the world," he continues : "This explains the activity, amounting even to disquietude, of men of genius, for the present can seldom satisfy them, because it does not fill their consciousness. This gives them that restless aspiration, that unceasing desire for new things, and for the contemplation of lofty things, and also that longing that is hardly ever satisfied, for men of similar nature, their equals, to whom they might communicate themselves ; whilst the common mortal, entirely filled and satisfied by the common present, ends in it, and finding everywhere his like, enjoys that peculiar satisfaction in daily life that is denied to genius."<sup>6</sup>

This plainly enough designates precisely the man of genius as the man who bears within him a higher striving, a more active impulse, more ardent desire, more fervent wish towards the realisation of some ideal, and who is thus at the same time much more capable of suffering than the average man, but also more capable of enjoying a transcendent happiness, according as his endeavour or will is hindered or assisted in the attainment of its aim. The will to live is the more strongly pronounced, the more the individual is endowed with genius ; but at the same

time the will to live assumes ever higher and more refined forms, and hence, under certain circumstances, such a higher and finer form of the will to live may be taken, by one unacquainted with the truth, for something opposed to the vital impulse, for something hostile to life, for a will, so to say, to die, for a kind of nihilism. Nietzsche uses for it the term "ascetic ideal".

To take an instance from the realm of ethics, let us think of Jesus Christ, who went to his death with full consciousness, and sealed the truth of his words by his death. Was it the will to live or the will to die that determined his actions as well as his doctrines? For the pessimist and nihilist it may be easy to answer: it was the will to die, the will to escape from this vale of tears, from this realm of misery and sin into the better world beyond, or into nothingness. And yet this would be radically wrong. It was not death that Christ sought, it was life, but a life that death cannot overcome and over which it has no power. With a heart full of infinite love, he embraced all human beings, his life overflowed into their lives; he wished to lead them to the highest perfection of their lives, as he experienced in himself the highest life, the highest perfection of the will to live so that, on the one hand, he could designate the "God of the living"<sup>7</sup> as his "Father," as a representative of humanity, the humanity which craves for life and happiness. Of Jesus Christ, if of any one, it could be said that his soul became "the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world"; but there can be no question of a denial of the will to live. Jesus rejects only the lower forms of the will to live, the hasty and eager pursuit of petty interests, because they stand in the way of the realisation of the higher forms of the will to live: "Take no thought for your life, what yet shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

7. *Matt. xxii. 82.*



The higher man rises above the lower forms of the will to live, the larger also will the sphere of his interests grow, the more will he live with and in others, the more intense will his own life be and the greater his enjoyment of it.

Therefore Schopenhauer says : "Genius is its own reward : for the best that one is, one must necessarily be for oneself. When we look up to a great man of former times, we do not think 'How happy is he to be still admired by all of us !' but, 'How happy must he have been in the immediate enjoyment of a mind at the surviving traces of which centuries revive themselves.' "8

The knowledge that the will to live, by disregarding the lower forms, is capable of assuming ever higher forms, till, in the highest form, it becomes one with the will of God, has found expression in Spinoza's "Ethics". But whereas Schopenhauer by genius means particular artistic genius, Spinoza represents it one-sidedly as intellectual or philosophical genius. According to Schopenhauer genius consists in aesthetic perception ; according to Spinoza in philosophic understanding.

Spinoza never uses the word genius, he speaks only in a quite general way of the mind of man and of its relation to God, but while plainly showing how man may be more or less free from base desires and passions, how man in his own human nature is capable of approaching more or less to the Deity, how his knowledge may be more or less purified by the intellect, he at the same time points to the characteristic differences between what we call genius and narrow-mindedness, or between what Spinoza terms man's freedom and bondage.

We call any activity free, when its purpose is centred in itself, when it is performed for its own sake. A sensation is free, when it has itself for its purpose. When we hear, only in order to hear, when we look, only for the sake of looking, without pursuing any theoretical or practical purpose, the result is what is called a free, an aesthetic sensation. Hearing and

seeing cause pleasure in themselves, they are connected with a feeling of delight, when nothing further is desired than to hear and to see. So likewise thinking must be called free, when it is its own purpose. When we seek to understand the world, to grasp the truth, without at the same time pursuing any purpose beyond, this finding and understanding of the truth in itself causes pleasure. Further, every practical activity, every action and piece of work must be considered free, whenever it is performed for its own sake, without regard to other purposes.

Now, the more a man is inspired by genius, the more will he devote himself with undivided mind and interest to all that he perceives by the senses, thinks, and does, and the freer, therefore, must he be considered in every exercise of his natural powers. A man is bound, when forced to do something against his will ; on the other hand, he is free, when he occupies himself with an object entirely of his own accord, and consequently with all his mind. Genius consists in nothing but a very vivid and living interest in what affects our senses, stirs our thoughts, and influences our actions, an interest to which we may also apply the term love. Since, as before stated, we are free in whatever we do with all our heart and soul, genius is identical with freedom. A man of genius is at the same time a free man, free at least in that in which his genius consists. So whenever Spinoza speaks of free men, we can substitute the expression "men of genius".

The freedom of sensation, that is, of aesthetic sensation, is entirely disregarded by Spinoza. The ideas of beauty and deformity are dealt with quite cursorily in a single passage. He speaks with a certain contempt of these ideas, which seem to him to have reference only to the imperfection of man, but not to the perfection of God. It is hardly possible to believe that Spinoza was devoid of all appreciation of perfection of outside appearance, of what we call natural and artistic beauty ; it is more probable that he merely did not fix his attention on that kind of mental activity called sensation, but primarily kept

in view knowledge, understanding and thought, and secondarily what is their natural development, namely, practical conduct. Spinoza says :

“The ignorant consider all things as made for themselves ; and call the nature of a thing good, evil, sound, putrid, or corrupt, just as they are affected by it. For example, if the motion by which the nerves are affected by means of objects represented to the eye conduces to well-being, the objects by which it is caused are called beautiful ; while those exciting a contrary motion are called deformed. Those things too which stimulate the senses through the nostrils are called sweet-smelling or stinking ; those which act through the taste are called sweet or bitter, full-flavoured or insipid ; those which act through the touch, hard or soft, heavy or light ; those, lastly, which act through the ears are said to make a noise, sound, or harmony, the last having caused men to lose their senses to such a degree that they have believed that God even is delighted with it. Indeed, philosophers may be found who have persuaded themselves that the celestial motions beget a harmony. All these things sufficiently show that everyone judges things by the constitution of his brain, or rather accepts the affections of his imagination in the place of things.”<sup>9</sup>

Of course, little can be done with this. Only the one truth may be drawn from these remarks of Spinoza's, namely, that like all contrary ideas, so also those of beauty and deformity are to be taken relatively. What is beautiful to one person may be ugly to another, and vice versa. In things themselves, as Spinoza truly says, there is no inherent absolute deformity or beauty. It is our mind, our sensation, that attributes beauty or ugliness to things ; but, according to Spinoza's own teaching, our mind itself is a portion of Nature, a part of God, and it is the divine, the perfect itself in man that enables him to see and feel outward perfection and beauty. Spinoza's interest, however, dwells prin-

9. *Ethic.* Translated by W. H. White ; translation revised by A. H. Stirling. 4th ed., 1910, pp. 44, 55.

cipally on thought and understanding, and not on sensation. He is entirely a philosopher, and so one-sided in this respect that he can conceive even of the love of God only, so to say, as a philosophical, an intellectual one : "Amor dei intellectualis" ; that love of God which consists in the pure knowledge of God's nature, means for Spinoza the highest perfection to which the human mind can rise.

It is true that, as our actions depend more or less on our understanding of things, a pure and true knowledge of the nature of things cannot fail to determine our conduct. Instead of allowing ourselves to be led by our passions and desires, rational reflection will become our guide in the labyrinth of life, and therefore it is that Spinoza makes the intellect or reason the basis of the conduct of the free man or, as we call him, the man of genius. Accordingly he treats "of the power of the intellect, or of human liberty" and endeavours to show the ways and means which lead to freedom from the power of passions and desires, or "affects." "In this part," he says, "I shall treat of the power of reason, showing how much reason itself can control the affects, and then what freedom of mind or blessedness is. Thence we shall see how much stronger the wise man is than the ignorant."<sup>10</sup>

Spinoza himself, however, must confess that the power of reason over passions and desires is but a conditional and limited one. He says : "I shall occupy myself here solely with the power of the mind or of reason, first of all showing the extent and nature of the command which it has over the affects in restraining them and governing them ; for that we have not absolute command over them we have already demonstrated."<sup>11</sup>

This truth daily experience also teaches us. We have all of us, beyond doubt, often enough been drawn into error against our own better insight, when passion, fear, or desire have come into play. We often distinctly and clearly see what is right,

10. *Ibid.* p. 250

11. *Ibid.* p. 250.

our reason tells us quite plainly what we ought to do, and yet, impelled by some irrational passion, we turn a deaf ear to it.

A rational idea becomes effective only when it itself receives an impetus, when it ceases to be a mere rational idea, but points the way for a living impulse, for an onward-striving force. Every power of the mind that gives a definite direction to the soul of man is called by Spinoza an affect, and the truth that an affect, a living impulse, a passion cannot be removed or limited in its living activity by a mere rational idea, but that affect must be put up against affect, power against power, passion against passion, if any result is to be reached, is expressed by Spinoza himself in the words : "An affect cannot be restrained nor removed unless by an opposed and stronger affect." <sup>12</sup>

For him, therefore, who has an interest not only in the recognition of truth as such, as was the case with Spinoza, but also in leading men to a godly and rational mode of life by means of the recognition of truth, as with Jesus Christ, it will be impossible to remain satisfied with the mere intellectual love of God, that is, with that love of God which consists in a pure knowledge of his nature and at the same time in a knowledge of the nature of the world. He will first of all see his highest task in the active, practical love of God, and this will be for him identical with the active, practical love of man. Christ did not simply retire to his closet and there construct a philosophical system by which the impulse to gain knowledge should be satisfied within us, but he went out into the market-places and lanes, into the houses and synagogues, healing and comforting, and working on others by his living example, until his last and greatest act which was the sealing of his infinite love to God and man by an ignominious and agonising death. It was not his teaching alone that lent to Christ his vast power over human minds, but the imitative impulse called forth and brought to life by his actions. There emanated from his personality a power that enabled others to convert his teachings into acts.

But if Spinoza is one-sided in his estimate of knowledge, that is of freedom or genius of pure thought, he is undeniably great in the conception and development of his philosophical system. With the incomparable insight of genius he grasped those principles that are at the base of all that exists, and erected upon them a marvellous system into which every great discovery of modern science, and especially of natural science, can easily be fitted. Thus the cell-theory atomism, the law of the conservation of energy, the doctrine of evolution, and other important truths with which we have become acquainted within the last fifty years, are already indicated in Spinoza's system and are in perfect harmony with it. But the most far-reaching of all is the truth on which the whole system is based, namely, that all that exists belongs to the one Nature, to the one essence of God, which finds expression in the vast multiplicity of the things of this world and which is, nevertheless, one spiritual unity. "The more we understand individual objects," says Spinoza, "the more we understand God;"<sup>18</sup> that is, the deeper the understanding we gain of the nature of individual things and the better we grasp their true idea, the more completely shall we recognise there closer connection with the highest idea, the idea of God.

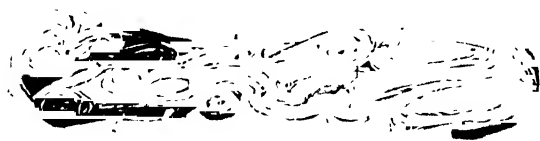
This deeper knowledge of ideas and their connection with the highest idea of God is accompanied by most intense enjoyment, since by its means man's power of thought reaches its highest expression. The impulse towards knowledge obtains thereby its fullest satisfaction, and that blessedness arises which, according to Spinoza, is combined with the intellectual love of God. "The highest good of the mind," says Spinoza, "is the knowledge of God."<sup>14</sup> And it is the impulse towards the highest knowledge that Spinoza calls the mind's intellectual love towards God. But, according to him, this impulse is of divine origin, and emanates from God Himself; the more a man is inspired from on high and expresses in his own nature the nature of God,

18. *Ethics*.

14. *Ibid*.

the stronger is that impulse towards the highest knowledge ; hence "The intellectual love of the mind towards God is the very love with which He loves Himself, in so far as He can be manifested through the essence of the human mind."<sup>15</sup>

This doctrine of Spinoza's is correct, but one-sided, as before said. The divine principle in man reveals itself not only in this impulse, in this love for knowledge, but just as much in the love for what is beautiful and creative. Just as there is bliss in the satisfaction of the striving after knowledge, so there is bliss in the satisfaction of the passion for beauty and the impulse towards action. Hence there is not only an intellectual love of the mind towards God, but also an aesthetic and a practical one. When perfection enters through our senses, it appears as beauty, and when it expresses itself in action, it becomes a creative deed. The practical love of the mind towards that which is eternal is the highest love and has found its most beautiful embodiment in Christ and in Buddha.



God honours me when I work,  
he loves me when I sing.

# FLOOD COMMISSION AND PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

*By* HUMAYUN KABIR

IN spite of half-heartedness and hesitancy, the Flood Commission's Report proposes the abolition of the Permanent Settlement. One passage from the Report, viz., paragraph 85, on page 38 of the first volume, is by itself enough to dispose of the arguments advanced in favour of the Permanent Settlement. The Report is quite definite that there is a "notable absence in Bengal of that certainty as to the respective rights and obligations of the parties which every sound and satisfactory system of land tenure should provide." That one sentence in the Report has condemned the Permanent Settlement out of court. The purposes for which the Permanent Settlement was made were that it would give security of tenure to the landlords as well as to the tenants and determine their relations to one another and the State and also secure a proper revenue to the State. And yet, a most important element in the Settlement, namely, the "determination of the respective rights and obligations of the parties" is left uncertain.

Before taking up the arguments in favour of State acquisition, it would be better to proceed to a consideration of the arguments against State acquisition, and examine, for whatever they are worth, the arguments we find in the Report itself as well as the arguments advanced elsewhere by supporters of the Permanent Settlement. The arguments of the minority in the Commission will be found on pages 39-41 of the Report. The first argument is that the present economic deterioration of Bengal is not due to the Permanent Settlement but to the increasing pressure of the population on land. But the supporters of this point of view forget that the increasing pressure of population on land was itself a result of the Permanent Settlement. The Permanent Settlement has put an undue premium on investments in land and



has thus diverted the money available in the country from industrial employment. By this diversion of capital from industry, the Permanent Settlement has led to the gradual decay and ultimate death of our ancient industries. Statutes passed in England for the suppression of the industries of this country were certainly an important factor but perhaps of equal importance was the diversion of capital from industry to land. That unfortunately is a process which is going on even to-day : even now, or at least till very recently, men of money and men in the lucrative professions—barristers, lawyers and doctors—have been in the habit of investing their savings in land. This was due, not only to a desire to own agricultural land, but perhaps to reasons of prestige as well. This increasing pressure of population on land is therefore itself very largely a result of the Permanent Settlement. Those who seek to defend the Permanent Settlement and say that the economic difficulties of the people of Bengal are not due to its operations are simply begging the question.

The next point made by the Minority Report is one that should be seriously considered, namely, the question of uneconomic holdings and the right of alienating land. The supporters of the minority view hold that the economic difficulties of the cultivators of Bengal are due to the uneconomic size of their holdings. This is the result of fragmentation and the tenants' right of alienating their lands freely has helped this process. It is also suggested that the Muslim law of inheritance is responsible for the fragmentation. These may all be contributing causes, but there is little doubt that the chief reason for the poverty of the cultivators and the people of this province lies in the increasing pressure of the population on land. If people had other avenues of employment and could engage their energies, initiative and enterprise in other spheres of avocation which promised them a proper income and an honourable status in life and society, this kind of fragmentation of holdings would surely not have taken place. Before the economic condition of the peasantry can be restored, two other points will have to be considered. These

are security of tenure and security against rack-renting, conditions that are absolutely necessary for agrarian welfare. If these conditions are met, there will be improvement to some extent. But our task is to examine whether these conditions can be fulfilled under the Permanent Settlement. Consolidation of holdings has been attempted in the Punjab and it could be attempted there only because there was State management. Perhaps even there it has not gone as far as was desirable, but still attempts were made and this was possible there only on account of State management. There is general agreement about the economic loss on account of the fragmentation of holdings, but it is impossible for the peasants and cultivators to agree to consolidation of holdings in their present condition. If the State takes the initiative in the matter, and if properties are acquired by the State, then and then alone can consolidation and collective farming be started on a co-operative basis.

The peasant must also be secured against rack-renting. There are some who assert that Bengal cultivators pay a very low rent. It is also suggested that the rates in Bengal are much lower than in other parts of India. That the rent is exorbitant and unprofitable is evidenced by the chronic default and progressive impoverishment of the peasantry of Bengal. Nobody can suggest that the default and impoverishment is deliberate. The peasant may default in order to defraud the landlord, but how to explain his chronic and progressive impoverishment?

The next argument advanced by the minority report is this. If State acquisition is given effect to, it would depress the position of the lower middle-class. There are many who thus grieve over the fate of the "poor" rent-receivers. But, according to paragraph 91, page 40 of the Report, 2.25 millions are dependent on rent collection as their only or chief source of income. According to others, about 15 millions are dependent on rent receipt for their livelihood. But the total for distribution among them is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 8 crores. There is no real discrepancy between these figures.

The Report has taken into account only the rent receivers while the other calculation takes into account their families as well. If Rs. 8 crores are distributed among these 15 millions, the gross income per head would be only about Rs. 5 per head per annum. But even this does not give us the accurate picture. It has been pointed out that there are about 700 families with an income of eight to ten thousand rupees or above per annum. If allowance is made for the privileged seven hundred, the income for the others will be only Rs. 4 or less per head per annum. Can it be argued that the loss of the Rs. 4 per head per annum will lead to the loss of sustenance of the middle class? On the contrary, abolition of the Permanent Settlement would release the ability of Bengal from its land-locked and moribund condition and bring back initiative and enterprise into our industrial life. It is common knowledge that there has not been the same development of industries in our province as in other provinces. The present lack of industries in Bengal is very largely due to the security-mentality which is so prevalent here, and this security-mentality has in its own turn resulted from the Permanent Settlement.

Two other arguments in favour of the Permanent Settlement may be considered together. The minority view in the Report is that the small compensation which the middle-class tenure-holders will receive for the loss of their holdings will be insufficient to induce them to invest their money in industrial concerns. All this is absolutely indefensible when we remember that for over a hundred years, men of small property or income have, through banks and joint-stock companies, developed industry and commerce on a scale which is perhaps unprecedented in the history of the world. Even to-day, 18 crores of rupees are paid as industrial wages in Bengal. There are yet others who wonder, "What will happen to the agricultural population without the Permanent Settlement? How can they find the means of livelihood even if there is industrialization? for, these agriculturists never go out of their villages." Such critics seem to be living in a past

which is fast disappearing, if it has not already disappeared. They forget that conditions are changing, and improved methods of communication are making the agriculturists in India and even in Bengal more and more mobile every year. With the growing mobility of labour, there is no reason why the agricultural population of Bengal cannot be diverted into industries. What after all is the experience of Bombay, the United Provinces and the Punjab in these respects? Have the people there suffered though they have no Permanent Settlement?

The minority report has referred to the fear of reduction in rent on account of political reasons. This however is not a danger but a necessity for reconstructing the economic life of the province. The present competitive rate of rent is exorbitant. It is true that Rs. 3-5 or thereabouts is the average rate of rent for the tenant. At the same time in the report of the Commission itself we find that the rate of rent of the under-*raiya*t is above six rupees. If to this is added the unrecognised rent which the *raiya*t is actually forced to pay on account of over-pressure of the population on the land, on account of the lack of sufficient land, it cannot be denied that the rent which the tenant or the cultivator has to pay is uneconomic and exorbitant. The average man in Bengal is more heavily taxed than perhaps in any other province. Rs. 7-8 is the *per capita* taxation and this is perhaps higher than in any other province except Bombay. This has already had its repercussions on the position of the peasant, whose condition is continually deteriorating.

When we take everything into consideration, the burden of taxation on the agriculturist in Bengal is greater than he can bear. The incontrovertible evidence of this is given by one simple fact. In spite of his best intentions, there is a constant deterioration in his debt position, and he is continually getting into arrears. I can not agree with those who say that the agriculturist is in a position to pay off his debts but he will not do so. If it is suggested that it is out of sheer perversity that he does not pay his debts to the *mahajans* and his rents to the

landlords, I would ask : Is it out of the same perversity that he with his family lives on half rations all his life ?

Then as regards *salami* and *nazarana*. They have, no doubt, been abolished by legislation but they exist in an indirect manner, and will exist so long as the demand for land is greater than the supply. These illegal exactions cannot be spirited away by statute. Once the Permanent Settlement has been abolished and industries developed in Bengal, then and then alone will economic rent gradually emerge and then and then alone can we talk of the equities of rent between different provinces.

The abolition of the Permanent Settlement and the acquisition of the interest by the State will not by itself bring the millennium, but it will at any rate bring the State face to face with the cultivator. It will help the cultivator to stand on his own feet and give him a better chance by improving his condition and quality as a result of superior and more extensive education. Extension of social services will be possible by making available to the State all future increments in land value. At present, the zemindars enjoy all unearned increments. Subinfeudation is due to unearned increments and leads to the creation of parasite classes. There may be fine men among them, but a system which brings into existence classes who contribute nothing to economic productivity of the province and live by encroaching upon the fruits of other people's labour must be condemned.

If State acquisition is effected, there will be a more equitable distribution of the tax-burden according to the principles of progressive taxation. At present, it is just the reverse. The rate of rent is light at the top and is heavier as we go down in the scale. In fact the *pargana* rate is very low. A zemindar has to pay perhaps annas 12 or only a little more, but when we come down to the *bargadar* or under-*raiyat*, we shall find that a *bargadar* has to pay perhaps Rs. 14 or even Rs. 16 per acre. Therefore, the principle under the Permanent Settlement seems to be : more burdens will be imposed on those who cannot bear the burden and those who are in a position to bear more

will pay less. If the State by acquisition comes face to face with the cultivator, this regressive taxation will disappear.

State acquisition will also release a considerable volume of capital and enterprise and thus help to create industries which will give employment to many. It will also correct the present unfair discrimination in favour of land in matters of taxation and thus remove one of the major obstacles to the employment of capital for the development of industries.

As a result of acquisition the State will be in a position to assume the responsibility not only for land but also the peasantry. One of the main reasons for Bengal's backwardness in land improvement is the uncertainty in the apportionment of responsibilities. Proprietorship is divided into many interests and diverse stages, and the result is that we have not developed even the land available to us ; 3·75 million acres of arable land still remain uncultivated in Bengal. They cannot be brought under cultivation, for nobody is willing to undertake the responsibility. If the State acquires all interests in land and becomes directly responsible for the welfare of the land and the peasantry, large-scale reclamation measures will be taken which will change the face of the province. In Bengal we have only 7 per cent. of the land under irrigation as against 54 per cent. in the Punjab. These two instances support the case for State acquisition of the land instead of leaving it to the anarchical inclinations of individuals who are not only irresponsible but also very often ignorant of what their actual obligations are.

Last but not least, State acquisition of all landed interests would curtail litigation and save the cultivator from the complexity and harassment from which he suffers to-day on account of the multiplicity of petty over-lords. This also is a point which is obvious. The present system of land-tenure in Bengal is one of the most complicated in the world and involves not only litigation and economic loss to the peasantry, but militates against conditions of improvement.

On economic grounds, the case for the abolition of the

Permanent Settlement and the resumption of all lands by the State is unanswerable. There remains the question of financial liability and the constitutional position. The financial position is intimately connected with the question of compensation and compensation depends upon the constitutional issues involved. The problem of compensation may be examined from three different points of view—the point of view of the individual and his right to compensation and thereafter from the point of view of the Government of India Act, and lastly from that of the duty of the State.

The constitutional position has been stated on page 42 of the Report and need not be repeated. Supporters of the Permanent Settlement depend upon sanctity of property rights and the freedom of contract. One may refer them to Green's lecture on "Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract" which served as the basis of Mr. Gladstone's legislation in respect of land, education and health. Green says—

"If the ideal of true freedom is the maximum of power for all members of human society alike to make the best of themselves, we are right in refusing to ascribe the glory of freedom to a state in which the apparent elevation of the few is founded on the degradation of the many, and in ranking modern society, founded as it is on free industry, with all its confusion and ignorant licence and waste of effort, above the most splendid of ancient republics.

"If I have given a true account of that freedom which forms the goal of social effort, we shall see that freedom of contract, freedom in all the forms of doing what one will with one's own, is valuable only as a means to an end. That end is what I call freedom in the positive sense : in other words, the liberation of the powers of all men equally for contributions to a common good. No one has a right to do what he will with his own in such a way as to contravene this end. It is only through the guarantee which society gives him that he has property at all, or, strictly speaking, any right to his possessions. This guarantee

is founded on a sense of common interest. Every one has an interest in securing to every one else the free use and enjoyment and disposal of his possessions, so long as that freedom on the part of one does not interfere with a like freedom on the part of others, because such freedom contributes to that equal development of the faculties of all which is the highest good for all. This is the true and the only justification of rights of property. Rights of property, however, have been and are claimed which cannot be thus justified. We are all now agreed that men cannot rightly be the property of men. The institution of property being only justifiable as a means to the free exercise of the social capabilities of all, there can be no true right to property of a kind which debars one class of men from such free exercise altogether."

The principle enunciated in the above quotation has been actually applied in England with regard to labour, education, health, and specially with regard to land. The remarks of Green on land are specially pertinent to our question. It is enough to say that the special characteristics of land demand that it be acquired by the State before any other form of property.

Next comes the question of compensation. So far as the right of the individual to compensation is concerned, the following considerations ought to be kept in mind.

Firstly, if expropriation took place, that was in 1793. It is not necessary to go into the details about respective rights, but out of the conflicting evidence one thing is clear. Neither the State nor the landlord nor the tenant had an absolute right in land. All had a qualified ownership and, to that extent, the Permanent Settlement gave new rights to the landlords by expropriating tenants.

Secondly, the landlords did not acquire estates out of philanthropy, and have already made sufficient and more out of their property. Nor can the landlords appeal to equity on this point, because the landlords did not themselves observe equity. At the time of the Permanent Settlement, they received



about three crores as rent but to-day they receive about thirteen to sixteen crores, a net increase in their rent by 10 to 13 crores. The series of Tenancy Acts are in themselves evidence that the State thought that the landlords did not observe equity. Those who appeal to equity must come with clean hands and the landlords' hands are not clean.

Thirdly, as for improvements, if any, effected by landlords, it was done by landlords to earn a return on capital and has in most cases been amortised. Landlords capitalised the increment and walked away with it if and when they sold out.

Fourthly, there is the question of hardship to the recent purchasers. They certainly deserve our sympathy but even they have no right to compensation. Like any other business venture, they speculated in property and they have failed. Theirs is a hard case but so is the failure of any other businessman. Like other businessmen, they too have no right to compensation.

So far as individual right to compensation is concerned, the individual has no such right. It has been said that section 299 gives the individual right to compensation, but if it is looked at carefully, the landlord will find that he has a very poor defence in the Government of India Act. Section 299 only provides that compensation must be paid, but it says nothing about the amount or principle of compensation. These can be decided by the local Legislature. Therefore, section 299 is less of a defence than landlords seem to think. Hence, the right of compensation granted in section 299 is a broken reed for landlords, but higher expediency or equity demands that the State must see that one section of its members do not needlessly suffer. The State must make provision for the absorption of the landed classes into the economic life of the country as easily and smoothly as possible. Hence, after the right of the individual has failed, the duty of the State steps in to provide for those who constitute its members.

The State must therefore provide facilities for the interim period, not because the individual is entitled to compensation, but because the State is the guardian of the welfare of citizens.

The Commission's recommendation for a flat rate is however unjustified. The Commission thought in terms of property which we have seen is without justification. We must provide in terms of necessity to allow the landed classes to adapt themselves to changed times and become useful and productive members of society. Nor is the plea of difficulty of working out a graduated rate advanced by the Commission tenable. Records of revenue and rent rolls are available and the Commission itself recommends that a new set of record of rights should be prepared, at an expense of five crores or more. This will enable the State to pay annuities according to the necessity of the different parties and make necessary changes in the flat rates of compensation.

Nor is there any defence for payment in cash. The Land Revenue Commission recommends payment in cash; but advances arguments which go against that recommendation. Such large-scale payments would disturb the money market and jeopardise industrial development and would lead to extravagance and wastage and speculation, especially in view of the past habits of the landlords. Payment should be made by annuity bonds. The annuity bonds should be based on the difference between gross collection and the actual rent or revenue liability. Since the landlord is saved from the hazard of management or collection, he should be satisfied to take 75 per cent. of his present gross earning, and the annuity would approximate to that. At the beginning, 75 per cent. of the difference between gross collection and rent or revenue liability should be allotted to the landlord; but this must be decreased by a fixed percentage every year so that at the end of 20 years or so, the annuity will be reduced to nothing. At the end of 20 years, the landlords will have no further claim on the State and the State will have no further liability for them.

The percentage saved every year can be transferred to a reserve fund. Out of this, a lump grant of five times the initial annuity may be paid to the landlord as a capital grant. In addition, the State has at the end of the period a huge fund for the develop-

ment of industries. In fact, this fund will become considerable by the end of four or five years and will continually increase and may be utilised for irrigation, electrification, communication and housing, to mention only a few among many possible types of industrialisation. And all these will employ labour and thus solve the problem, not only of agricultural but also of middle-class unemployment. Also, in the course of 20 years, the landed classes will have a period during which they can adapt themselves to the changed order of the times, besides the capital secured by them for profitable employment in industry and commerce.

An illustration will make the scheme clear. Suppose the gross collection is Rs. 1000/- and the rent or revenue liability Rs. 200/- per year. In that case the landlord will get in the first year Rs. 600/-, Rs. 570/- in the second year and so on till on the completion of twenty years, he has no further claim, but may be given by the State a lump capital grant of Rs. 3000/- to start some new industry or commerce. In all, the landlord will have received Rs. 9300/- spread over a long period, enabling a gradual adjustment to the new conditions along with a small capital to give him a start in life at the end of the period.

If this be thought harsh, it need only be pointed out that the Permanent Settlement cannot function by itself but is bolstered up by the Court of Wards and other special legislation. If these are removed, in the course of a few years and automatically, the Permanent Settlement will go. If the State does not grant landlords special facilities for revenue and certificate sales and if it does not take the estates into the Court of Wards, can the Permanent Settlement continue? Abolition of the Court of Wards and of other special facilities will be apparently a less drastic method of resumption because it is more gradual, but only apparently. In fact it would be far more drastic for the landlord, for it would mean loss of estates without compensation or a period of adjustment plus the compassionate pension suggested in the above schemes. Which will the landlords choose?

## TENDENCIES IN MODERN LITERATURE

By PROF. A. HAYE

THERE is a Latin adage, "*Litera scripta manet*," which means that "what is written down is permanent." That veteran, arch literary critic, George Saintsbury, also remarked towards the end of his well-known *A History of English Literature*, in an equally dexterous and exuberant language, "It is the glory of the written word that conquers time."

Undoubtedly so ! But in this present world of ours, in spite of the acute shortage of paper, every year millions of literary books are written and published. Nevertheless, of this whole lot only a few represent genuine and catholic literature. All the rest are swept away by the flood of time to the ocean of oblivion. Only true literature survives and lasts for ever. But the tendencies at work in the modern literary writings reveal an adverse picture. Let us, therefore, make a dispassionate study of this trend of modern writing.

Before I proceed any further, I must say that evolution has taken us so much forward and we are so much accustomed to the consequences of the changed and changing world, that sometimes we even forget and fail to realize how far we have advanced. It is difficult even to guess that a new world is being forged and a new trend of writing is gaining ground in the realm of the world literature.

We are told by the hordes of critics of modern literature that the tide of "realism" and "naturalism" is rising higher and higher in the domain of the present-day writings. They also assert that human life is being portrayed in all its nakedness ; that artificialities have disappeared ; and that the waves of disillusionment have washed off all that was formal and unnatural in us. This is what has aptly been designated as a "disillusionment of personal experience." We are, as if, so much overwhelmed by

the present circumstances and the world in transition, that we cannot look at anything but the hard and stern realities of life. At the same time, we have inculcated a kind of cynical ideology to meet the "expected crash" which may come any moment. We are mere onlookers ; we are not satisfied with the formal situations of our daily life. We, and our contemporaries, want to see for ourselves and also to show to others the naked social problems deserving urgent and immediate reforms. They have created an incentive to the intellectual transformation in so far as literature is concerned. You may call it an innovation, if you like. But, you will agree, it is an innovation of a curious type. The cross-currents and under-currents of tyrannical and overbearing attitudes of the underlings of our underworld are vehemently exposed. And there is little doubt that these problems have a universal appeal, for the simple reason that these are the problems of all men for all times to come.

The main credit that should go to the modern writers is that they give expression to these problems as they appear to them, and they do not try to answer them. They simply diagnose and leave the cure to others. In other words, they present the social problems in their true colours. This is what has sometimes been called an "anti-romantic" and "anti-idealistic" tendency, which has gradually been developed due to a growing menace of the impending dangers and threats to our culture and civilisation. Romanticism is opposed to realism, and idealism to naturalism : the sooner we do away with them, the better it would be for us, the world at large, and for generations to come. It is also argued that unthinking reformers wish to enforce unpractical and idiosyncratic ideals, and that this symbolism will lead us nowhere, and is no better or worse than a fool's paradise.

Here a pertinent question may be asked as to how and why this "realism" has sprung up. To my mind, it is the natural upshot of the reaction against the rainbow dreams of idealism and symbolism that prevailed immediately before the two world wars. It was mainly under this influence that a psychologi-

cal development has most craftily been delineated with the result that we find to-day that the trend of literary writing has to deal more with psychological than with idealistic or romantic factors, which are now spurned as a "moonshine" or a "daydream of an opium-eater." In short, they do not believe in mere exploitation. The reactions felt by them are true and genuine.

As a matter of fact, these tendencies in themselves are reactionary, marking the end of a period, the period of the breakdown of capitalism. This is however not an end to a means, but a means to an end. A new tradition of an "individualist" movement in literature has been inaugurated. It represents the post-war search for change, for re-orientation, for re-discovery, and re-evolution and re-valuation, and an adventure for re-experimentation. It cannot also be denied that due to certain inexplicable reasons, certain corners of the human mind could not be thoroughly brought to the surface before now. These modern writers are fully conscious of what is happening in the world around them, and they do realise that everyone of them has got to play a part in this struggle to create a new and freer society. They cannot be won and bought over by reactionary forces. They are heralds of the progressive movement. They send good wishes to the combatants. They feel in the heart of their hearts that the struggle against reaction is just, and as such they are playing an active part in creating the society and culture of the future. Their conscience pricks them, and they confess that the present society badly needs a complete overhauling. They also comprehend that the existing structure of society cannot survive and that the era of finance-capital is over. Some believe that nothing can save this decaying civilisation and that further development of culture is impossible. They bitterly criticise the loyalties at force. They are the symbols of the new spirit. The two wars have killed off the spate of the old conventions and traditions which were very near and dear to our forefathers. Lives and landscapes have changed tremendously.

So far so good. But what will this new society be worth ? We cannot at the same time help noticing very sadly that the sophisticated Twentieth Century is sliding back to certain old, evil, sensational and licentious practices. The uprising of the new political "isms" and the shadow of impending economic slump, stringency and depression have darkened the temper of the times. This change has undoubtedly affected all phases of life, but more particularly has it influenced literature, as life and literature are the component parts of an organic whole. Our modern fiction, drama and poetry reflect a revolution of the worst type in the outlook and spirit of the whole generation. Onslaughts on religion, on dogmas, on morals and decency have become more virulent and envenomed. Melancholy is painted in its deepest form. Gloom has immensely deepened. We have supped full of blood and horrors, mud and filth, obscenity and vulgarity. There is no slackening of the tension, no concession to overwrought nerves, no resting-place for the overwrought soul. Machines and machines and machines all round. Human life itself has become mechanical. Cannons to the right of them ; cannons to the left of them. There are machines of destruction almost everywhere ; tanks, bombers, fighters, anti-aircraft and above all there is a talk of the use of gas. And now instead of the age-old axiom we may modify it as, "What machines we are and what machines we pursue."

The influence of this so-called new spirit has its most powerful exponents in Huxley, Lawrence, Joyce, Shaw, Eliot, Sinclair, Spender, and Auden. In them the new fire has smouldered into a duskier and intenser heat. In some of their works, we find hate and hideousness, lust and lasciviousness, and a bitter ironic comment on the ways of men and women. Although they have studied these walks of life with earnestness and detail, yet they depict the decadence of morals. When any particular element occurs in excess, and disturbs the balance of forces which keeps the work a coherent and intact whole, then it is definitely in decadence, as it is without any restraint or measure. Sensualism

in some of their writings takes the place of character. Frustration and resignation, despondency and nihilism, are their keynotes. They are in short demoralising and degenerating the whole of the human race as they openly cultivate indecency. They play with the sentiments and passions of their characters and, if I may say so, of the readers as well.

It may be remarked that perhaps I am too sweeping in my condemnation of the tendencies of modern literature. May be, I am. But I cannot help giving expression to what I and a section of people of my way of thinking do honestly feel, and in so doing I shall give a few specific instances to support my theorisation. I must also say that no author can ever escape from the influences of his or her time, and as such these writers have their places in literary history and derive from the great impulses which have set in motion all the enterprises of the present century. Their minds and hearts have been touched by the intenser conflicts of loyalties in these troubled times the like of which perhaps the world has never seen before : some of the acute problems have baffled them beyond imagination, and it is an age of interrogation in the real sense of the word.

Space does not permit me to take into account fuller details. At any rate, I shall cite two instances. They are D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce. Till lately some of their books were not permitted to be imported in America and the British Empire. The ban on them has only recently been lifted. I do not take up these instances only because of the ban, but also because of the fact that their ranges are, to borrow the words of a great critic, "extraordinarily narrow", and their sense of character is not very strong, and they give us very little action and "a good deal of aimless talk". They suggest dark promptings chiefly with regard to sex. Not only that. They also try to "philosophise" upon, instead of merely describing these "orgiastic impulses". They are really the writers of a "world in rut", and even so are hailed as its "prophets", but, I am afraid, with most unfortunate results. Their spirits seem to



have been thwarted and they can find no consolation. They have made, so to say, "blue-prints" for a new world.

Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, first published in 1928, is undoubtedly a frank description of the physical relations of two lovers. Throughout the expression is fine, yet it has made no contribution to the wealth of literature and has added nothing to the form of the novel either. It has only led, as some one has put it, "to a bolder description of sexual life than his predecessors".

To say the least, this can be called a contribution to the "sexual science" and Lawrence's name may be bracketed with Miss Marie Stopes, Havelock Ellis, Costler, Hirschfeld, Tencnbaum and others.

Speaking of James Joyce with special reference to his *Ulysses*, first published in 1922, I have given it a very laborious, careful and patient study. Joyce attempts to write in a manner that will image the whole of life in a microscopic method, of the conscious, subconscious, and even, I should say, the unconscious. Towards the end of this novel, he has described the "inner contemplations" of his characters concentrating on their own sexual life. He shows the "mental wanderings" and "intellectual debauchery" of a person in Dublin for the space of 24 hours. There is a danger that this kind of lewdness will overlay the art altogether and without this, I am afraid, literature cannot and will not survive.

In conclusion, I can do no better than quote a remark of a Russian savant, Karl Radek, which is applicable to this group of writers. He has pointed out that this technique of writing has reduced "naturalism" to "clinical observation"; "A heap of dung, crawling with worms, photographed by a cinema apparatus through a microscope",—such is their achievement. This is not only vulgar in essence, but also purely pornographical in spirit, and a direct challenge to our ethical codes. This is not naturalism. This is not realism. This is ultra-naturalism. This is surrealism, which, as I have said before, is another name for "blue-prints".

## MUSLIMS AND INDIAN SCIENCES

By BIKRAMA JIT HASRAT

MUSLIM interest in India—particularly in Indian sciences, viz. religion, astronomy, astrology, medicine, mathematics, etc.—presents today a great historical phenomenon revolving back to as early as the first half of the 2nd century A. H. The meteoric rise of Islam beyond the Arabian peninsula into Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Persia within a decade of the death of the holy Prophet, brought the sturdy Arabs into contact with some of the most ancient civilisations the world had ever seen. The Arab warrior with a fanatical zeal conquered new lands, the Arab administrative genius incorporated them into the *Dār-ul-Islām*, but in the wake of the two came slowly and imperceptibly the Arab mind, to study and understand the cultural and the intellectual achievements of those whom they had conquered. Gradually, within a century, the process of cultural contact with the outside world proved a great civilising force which culminated in the Arab renaissance movement at the great centre of Islamic learning at Baghdad, founded by al-Manṣūr in A. H. 145.

The reign of the Caliphs saw an unprecedented intellectual interest of the Arab world in the religion and sciences of the non-Muslims. Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (A. H. 136-158) established a research and translation Bureau entitled the *Bait al-Hikmat*, where learned men engaged themselves in the study and translation of Greek, Syriac, Zend, Latin and Sanskrit works, mostly on philosophical, astronomical and medical sciences. The patronage of science and literature, both Islamic and foreign, continued during the glorious reigns of Hārūn (A. H. 170-193) and Māmūn (A. H. 198-218). Men of letters, poets, physicians, and philosophers mustered at Māmūn's court for their learning. "The monasteries of Syria, Asia Minor and the Levant," observes

Muir,<sup>1</sup> "were ransacked for manuscripts of the Greek philosophers, historians and geometricians. These with vast labour and erudition were translated into Arabic." During this period Indian, Jewish and Christian scholars were maintained at the court.

Indian thought reached the early Islamic world through diverse channels. The Magian, imbued both in Indian and Persian philosophy and learning, embraced Islam during al-Manṣūr's reign. He brought with him the knowledge of Indian and Buddhistic religions, customs and traditions. The great family of Barmak ministers who ruled the Islamic world for more than half a century ( 136-186 A. H. ), were perhaps the greatest Indianists whose interest in Indian learning was unbounded. Though the Barmaks were Indian Buddhists in origin converted to Islam, and it is probable, that Khālīd b. Barmak might have been "induced by family traditions" to introduce Indian sciences into the Islamic world, it would be wrong to assume that the whole intellectual interest of the Muslims rested on the official patronage of the Baghdad court. The unfortunate end of the Barmaks with their extermination by Hārūn al-Rashīd, did not bring an abrupt end to the Indo-Arab cultural contact ; on the other hand, Indian sciences had already aroused Muslim interest to such an extent that during the next few centuries we find Arab historians, scholars, geographers and travellers visiting India to obtain first-hand information about her people, geography, religion, sciences and social customs. The process of cultural contact between the Arabs and the Indians was a part of the great Arab renaissance movement ; though academic in character, it was, nonetheless, a spontaneous effort of the Muslims to acquire knowledge of the sciences of other peoples of the world. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the amount of Indian influence on Islamic medicine, astronomy, mathematics etc., though Nicholson thinks, that it was considerable, but "was greatly inferior to that of the Greeks."

1. *The Caliphate : Rise, Decline and Fall*, Edinburgh, 1924, p. 509.

Many Arab scholars continued to show an ever-increasing interest in Indian sciences. Dr. Sachau thinks,<sup>2</sup> that in Alberūnī's time in Arabia "there were circles of educated men who had an interest in getting the scientific works of India translated into Arabic, who at the same time were sufficiently familiar with the subject-matter to criticise the various representations of the same subject and to give preference to one, to the exclusion of the other". Even before that, at Baghdad in the 2nd century A. H., many religious discussions were often held between Muslim scholars and learned men of other communities. It is stated that under the patronage of the Barmaks, many *Pandits* took part in these discussions and one or two Muslims were sent to India to acquire the knowledge of Indian sciences.<sup>3</sup>

It is curious that with all the intellectual forces working at the Baghdad court, the Indians made very little response to the genuine philosophical interest of the Muslims in India. They received Muslim travellers with reserve and suspicion, and very few, if any, showed any inclination towards acquiring any knowledge of Islamic religion, philosophy and social customs. There is no evidence to that effect except that during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (A. H. 170-193), a Hindu ruler sent a message to Baghdad that a Muslim theologian may be sent over to India to acquaint him about their religion. A Hindi ( Sanskrit ? or Sindhi ? ) translation of the Qur'ān is said to have been made in A. H. 280 at the order of a Hindu Raja. According to Yanbū'ī, in the first half of the 4th century A. H., the ruler of Alra named (Mahrug ?) wrote to Amīr Abdullah b. 'Umar, the governor of Maṣūra in Sind to send some one to initiate him into Islamic religion.<sup>4</sup>

Before Alberūnī, Jāhiz of Baṣra (d. 255 A. H.) a famous

2. *Alberūnī's India*, London, 1914, p. xxiv.

3. For details of many religious discussions at Baghdad and in India and description of Indian religious customs etc. vide. Kāmil Ibn al-Aṭhīr (Account of the year 148 A. H.) ; Mas'ūdī's *Kitāb Murāj al-Dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawhar* (ed. Barbier de Meynard), Vol. I. pp. 162-68, 258-54, 298, 327-28; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 446 sq. ; 'Ajā'ib al-Hind, Leydon, p. 4, ff. etc.

4. 'Ajā'ib al-Hind, opt. cit.

scholar in the Arabic language wrote on the Principles of Indian Rhetoric in his work entitled the *Kitāb al-Bayān*. Ahmad b. Ya'qūb b. Ja'far (d. 287 A. H.), a historian and geographer who visited India, has compiled a list of Indian works translated into Arabic.<sup>5</sup> Muhammad b. Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm in his encyclopaedic work the *al-Fibrīst*,<sup>6</sup> refers constantly to a large number of works on Indian religion, medicine, astronomy etc. translated into Arabic. Qāḍī Šā'id Andulusi (d. 462 A. H.) has devoted one chapter on Indian sciences in his *Ṭabaqāt-ul-Ummam*<sup>7</sup> and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's (390-668 A. H.) general biography of physicians entitled the '*Uyūn al-Inba' fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibba'*' contains one chapter on Indian physicians.<sup>8</sup>

From the second century A. H. onwards, Arab historians, geographers and travellers reflected the increasing interest of the Muslim intellectual world in India. Among the former, many came to India, but their works refer more to Indian history, geography and natural sciences than to the religion, castes and sects of India. Ibn Khurdādhbah's *Kitāb al-Masālik wal-Mamālik*<sup>9</sup> (written in A. H. 250), a work on the World Land and Sea Routes, deals also with Indian coasts and customs. Sulaiman Tajir (d. A. H. 237) in his otherwise admirable account of his travels in Iraq, India and China entitled the *Silsilat-ut-Tanārīkh*,<sup>10</sup> shows little interest in Indian religious thought, though he gives at some length details of Indian social life and the administration of the coastal kingdoms. "India is the birth-place of the Chinese religion, which consists in the worship of Buddha's idols," he observes, "but it is also the home of medicine, astrology and philosophy."<sup>11</sup> Abū Zaid Sīrafī (A. H. 264), who wrote a Supplement to Sulaiman Tajir's *Safarnāma*, speaks

5. *Ibn Wadīh qui Dicitur al-Jaḡubī Historiae* (ed. Houtama), Vol. I. p. 98 & 104.

6. Ed. by Fluegel, Leipzig.

7. Bairut, 1912., p. 11.sq.

8. Vol. II. P. 83 sq.

9. Ed. by Goeje, Leydon, 1899.

10. Ed. by Langles, Paris, 1845.

11. *Ibid.* p. 57.

of Indian religion—conception of the soul, transmigration, etc., the customs of Buddhist monks and the *Deradāsīs* in south Indian temples.<sup>12</sup> The accounts of great Arab travellers like Abū Dulaf Mus'ar b. Muhalal Yanbū'ī (A. H. 331) who travelled in China, Turkistan, Tibet, Kashmir, Multan, Sind and southern coast of India; Buzurg b. Shahryār (A. H. 300), the famous writer of the '*Ajā'ib al-Hind*'; the globe-trotter Mas'ūdī (A. H. 303), who visited Iraq, Syria, Armenia, Asia Minor, Africa, Sudan, Abyssinia, China, Tibet and India; Istakharī (A. H. 340), the author of the *Masālik al-Mamālik*,<sup>13</sup> Ibn Hawqal, Ya'qūbī, Abul Faraj, Maqdisī, Alberūnī, Idrīsī, Dimishqī and Ibn Baṭṭūṭā, show the great extent of Muslim interest in Indian history, religious philosophy, ethnology, and social customs.

Muhammadan literature on Indian religious beliefs before Alberūnī's time, as compared with works on Indian sciences, is negligible. A few works are known only by their names. The first is the now extinct *al-Diyānāt* of Abul 'Abbās al-Irānshahrī, of whom Alberūnī remarks, that "when he came in his work to speak of the Hindus and the Buddhists, his arrow missed the mark." The second is an unknown work on Buddhism by Zurqān, probably a contemporary of al-Irānshahrī; the third is the *Kitāb al-Bilad wal Tārīkh*,<sup>14</sup> a general history of world religions by Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir Muqqadasi (A. H. 335) and the fourth, though written in the middle of the 4th century A. H. by al-Shahristānī, entitled the *al-Millal wal-Nihal*, devotes an exclusive chapter to the religious systems of India.

"Of the more ancient or Indo-Aryan stratum of scientific literature," observes Dr. Sachau,<sup>15</sup> "nothing has reached our time save a number of titles of books, many of them in such a corrupt form as to baffle all attempts at decipherment." Many such

12. The Second Book of the *Silsilat-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 60-1, 77-79, 98-101, 115-22, 126-180, 188-89, 145-47.

13. Ed. by Goeje. Leyden, 1870.

14. Paris, 6 Vols.

15. Alberūnī's *India*, London, 1917, p. xxxii.

names have come down to us from al-Manṣūr's reign ( A. H. 136-158) when collection of works on science and their classification increased greatly.<sup>16</sup> In the field of medicine, Indian contribution was by far the greatest. Even before the time of the Abbasids, it is likely, that as early as the first century A. H., Muslims had studied foreign medicine and many works chiefly Syriac and Greek on the subject had been translated into Arabic. An Indian *vaidya*, named Manka, is described by Ibn al-Nadīm to have cured successfully Hārūn al-Rashīd of a serious malady.<sup>17</sup> A Hindu physician, named Ibn Dhan,<sup>16a</sup> is mentioned as the director of the hospital of the Barmaks at Baghdad. Yahya b. Khālid Barmak not only appointed Indian physicians in Baghdad hospitals but also engaged them to help in the translation of Sanskrit medical works into Arabic in the Imperial *Dār al-Hikmat*.<sup>18</sup> He is also said to have sent a man to India to collect indigenous herbs.<sup>19</sup>

Of the most important Indian works on medicine, pharmacology, toxicology, etc. translated into Arabic, very few have, however, survived in entirety ; some at least are available in fragmentary character, mostly in the form of quotations in later works. These are Sasuruta's Manual on Indian Medicine translated into Arabic by Manka entitled *Sasru* ; two Sanskrit works described by Ya'qūbī as *Sindbshān* and *Istangir* translated by Ibn Dhan.<sup>20</sup> Abdullah b. 'Alī translated Charaka's work on Indian medicine from a Persian version of the same. Manka, at the instance of Sulaimān b. Ishāq, translated a Sanskrit work on pharmacology. Ibn al-Nadīm gives a full list of the works on Indian medicine known to the Muslims. According to Khwārazmī, besides many other minor works on the subject,

16. Suyutī : *History of the Caliphs*, Calcutta, 1880, p. 267.

16a. According to Sachau, the name of this Indian physician may be Dhanya or Dhanin, chosen probably on account of its etymological relationship with the name Dhanvantari, the name of the mythical physician of the gods in Manu's law book and the epos. ( *Opt. cit.* xxxii ).

17. *al-Fihrist*, ed. by Fluegel, Leipzig, 1871, p. 192.

18. *Ibid.* p. 245.

19. *Ibid.* p. 845.

20. Vol. I. p. 105. Ibn al-Nadīm ( p. 808 ) calls the first work as *Sindstāg*

one by Shānaq (?) on veterinary science is mentioned to have been translated into Arabic.<sup>21</sup>

Indian astronomy, astrology and kindred sciences have received the special attention of the Muslims. Ibn Abī Aṣeba' observes,<sup>22</sup> that at Baghdad court Kanka Pandit was the best known among Indian astrologers besides the famous physician Manka. Of the former, Ibn al-Nadīm mentions,<sup>23</sup> that four of his works translated into Arabic were entitled the *Kitāb al-Namūdār fī al-'Amār*, the *Kitāb al-Asrār al-Mawālīd*, the *Kitāb al-Qirānāt al-Kabīr* and the *Kitāb al-Qirānāt al-Saghīr*; while the latter introduced the Muslims to the *Brahma-Siddhānta*, the famous Indian treatise on astronomy by Brahmagupta. This work was translated into Arabic by Ya'qūb al-Farazī under the name of *Sindhind*. Muhammad b. Ismā'īl Tanūkhī went to India to study Indian astrology.<sup>24</sup> Caliph Mu'taqid Billāh (A. H. 279-286) sent Ahmad Khafī Dailmī, a well-known astronomer and mathematician to India to study these sciences. According to Jāhiz<sup>25</sup> and Ibn al-Nadīm,<sup>26</sup> Bahla and his son Ṣālih who embraced Islam, Manka, Bazigar (?) and Falbarfal (?) were famous Indian astronomers at the court of Hārūn al-Rashīd. The Sanskrit work of Aryabhata was translated into Arabic by al-Farazī the Younger and entitled as the *Arjaband*. Brahmagupta, without doubt, "taught the Arabs before they became acquainted with Ptolmey", but *Sindhind* was not the exclusive source of the Muslims on Indian astronomy. Brahmagupta's second work, the *Khaṇḍakhādya* had already been translated a little earlier under the name of *Alarkand*.<sup>27</sup> Among other Hindu astrologers, whose works were known to the Muslims, were Judar Hindi with his work (in translation ?) known as *al-Mawālīd*; Nihak (?)

21. *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm*, p. 186.

22. Vol. II. p. 88.

23. *Opt. cit.* p. 270.

24. *Ṭabaqāt-i-Im Bākuya*, Paris, 1914, p. 44.

25. *Kitāb al-Bayān*, p. 40.

26. *Opt. cit.*

27. *Opt. cit.*



Hindī with his work known as the *Asrār al-Masā'il* and Singhal Hindī with his work known as the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd al-Kabīr*.

During the reign of al-Manṣūr, Ibn al-Maqaḥḥa, a converted magian and a thorough scholar in many languages including Greek, Pahlawi and Sanskrit, translated into Arabic the *Pañchatantra* and named it *Kalīlāh wa Dimna*. A Pahlawi version of it was made during Naushirwan's reign and later, at the order of the Samanid ruler Amīr Naṣr b. Ahmad (A. H. 301-331), Raudakī versified it into a Persian *mathawī*. The latter version is now lost, except its 242 couplets restored by Ethe in a monograph on Raudakī.<sup>28</sup> Ibn al-Muqaḥḥa's Arabic version of the *Pañchatantra* is perhaps the only Sanskrit work which was later on translated into about a dozen other languages including Syriac, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Spanish, French, Turkish, English and Persian.

## II

The invasion of Sind by Muhammad b. Qasim in A. H. 93/A. D. 712, marks a new phase both politically and culturally in the Indo-Arab relations, and till the close of the 10th century A. D., when Sutlan Mahmud of Ghazna made a fresh series of invasions in the North-west, there was a sharp decline of official interest in Indian sciences. The Arab conquerors of Sind, with their new democratic ideals and zeal for the propagation of the faith, were, nonetheless, tolerant towards the religious institutions of non-Muslims. Though they left many temples undemolished, yet their attitude towards the study of Indian religions and sciences was markedly indifferent. Mahmud of Ghazna's reign is described by his antagonist Alberūnī as ruinous in which "the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouths of people," but with all his indifference towards Indian thought and culture, it cannot, however be denied that he ranked as an outstanding figure in the patronage of Islamic sciences, art and literature.

28. Browne : *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 457.

28a. Alberūnī's *India* p. 22.

The Ghaznawids and the Sultanate of Delhi as kings showed very little interest in Indian literature, but both, irrespective of their idiosyncracies, were keen supporters of learning and culture. Towards the close of the Ghaznawid rule, during the reign of Behram Shah (A. H. 514-547), Abul Ma'ālī Naṣr b. 'Abdul Hamīd Mustaufī, who was the chief secretary in the *Dār-ul-Insha* during Sultan Ibrāhīm's reign, translated into Persian the Arabic version Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kalīlāh wa Dimna*. A few other works of Indian origin have survived the ravages of the time. It is recorded<sup>29</sup> that Sultan Feroz Shah in A. H. 772 found in a temple at Jawālamukhī 1300 rare Sanskrit works. He called the Pandits of the temple and selected a number of works, mostly on astronomy, music and physical culture and ordered those to be translated into Persian. Among these was an Indian work on astronomy translated as the *Dalā'il-i-Ferozī* which Badāūnī claims to have read at Lahore in A. H. 1000. Another work on Indian astronomy by the great Varāhmihira was translated into Persian by the order of Sultan Feroz Shah (A. H. 752-790) by Shams-i-Sirāj 'Afīf, the author of *Tārīkh-i-Ferozshāhī* under the title of *Tarjuma'i Barahī*; a treatise entitled the *Ghunyāt al-Munyāt* on Indian music was translated during the same period by an anonymous writer.<sup>30</sup> During the reign of Sikandar Lodhī (A. H. 894-923) a work on Indian medicine was compiled from Sanskrit sources under the supervision of Miān Buhwat son of Khawās Khan. This work entitled the *Tibb-i-Sikandarī* or the *Ma'dan ush-Shifa'i Sikandarī*, was decidedly an improvement on all previous translations from Indian works on medicine, as it contained a detailed and most comprehensive account of therapeutics (*Sūtra-Sthān*), structure of human body (*Sārīrak-Sthān*) and the diagnosis and treatment of diseases (*Nidana Chikitsa-Sthān*).<sup>31</sup>

During this period the Muslim kingdoms of Kashmir and Deccan showed a unique spirit of toleration towards non-Muslims and an active patronage of Indian learning. Zain

29. *Muntakhab-ul-Tawārīkh*, Vol. I. p. 249.

30. *Firishā*, Vol. I. p. 380.

31. *Risū*. Vol. II, p. 472.

al-‘Ābdain Shah ( A. H. 826-877 ) of Kashmir and Sultan Ibrāhīm ‘Ādil Shah ( ac. A. H. 942 ) are both outstanding figures. According to Firishta, the former was a linguist, knowing besides Islamic languages, Sanskrit and Tibetan which he could also speak. His religious toleration was not confined to the abolition of the *jizya* on the Hindus and prohibition of cow-slaughter, but he also enriched the Sanskrit language by ordering the translations of many Arabic and Persian works into that language, and similarly among many Sanskrit works translated into Persian at his instance were the *Mahābhārata* and the *Raj Taranginī*, the well-known dynastic history of Kashmir. Ibrāhīm ‘Ādil Shah of Deccan was a man of enlightened outlook. According to Firishta,<sup>82</sup> he not only entrusted the administration to his able Hindu advisers, but also made Sanskrit the official language of his state. He was well-versed in Indian music and is said to have composed an original treatise on the subject entitled the *Nau-Ras*.<sup>83</sup>

Among the Muslim travellers and historians whose individual efforts brought the knowledge of Indian sciences to the Muslim world, Abū Raihān Alberūnī occupies a very high place. He came to India and studied at first-hand Indian religious systems, philosophy, literature, chronology, astronomy, customs and laws and in return taught Greek sciences to Indians. He gives an inkling of the reasons, which at this time tended to make more intimate cultural contact between Hindus and Muslims extremely difficult. These, according to him, were the difficulties of lingual and racial barriers, the fierce iconoclastic zeal of the Muslim conquerors, and the aloofness of the Hindu priestly class born of religious prejudices and self-conceit. Alberūnī’s approach towards Indian religions and sciences is characterised by a peculiar charm of love for independent enquiry and an un-biassed mind. In his method he is very thorough and searching, often cynically critical, but, nonetheless, very sincere in the acquisition of knowledge. His attitude is that of “one who wants to

82. Firishta, *opt. cit.*

83. Rieu : *Cat. of Persian MSS. in the British Museum*, Vol. II. 741b ; also Etthe ; Vol. I. No. 1509.

converse with the Hindus, and discuss with them the question of religion, science or literature on the basis of their own civilisation.”<sup>84</sup> Even more than that. He studied Indian religions, philosophy, literature, sciences and customs with an assiduous zeal from original sources and compared them with the theories of Plato, Aristotle, Galenus, Ptolemy and other Greek writers.

His knowledge of Sanskrit works, which he has enumerated as his sources in the *Kitāb al-Hind*,<sup>85</sup> seems to be enormous. His translations from Sanskrit include that of the *Patañjali*, a treatise on the *Yoga* and theistic philosophy developed by Pātañjala; the *Sāṅkhya* of Kapila; Brahmagupta’s *Brahma-Siddhānta* on Indian astronomy together with an original composition on the Principles of *Siddhānta* in Arabic entitled the *Jwāmi’ al-Manjūd bi-Khawāṭir al-Hunūd*; Varāhmihira’s *Laghujātkam* and many other translations on Indian sciences....

Amīr Khusrau ( d. 725 A. H. ), “the Indian Turk,” stands as one of the leading figures whose appreciation of India, her sciences religions and languages was unbounded. He studied Sanskrit, wrote poetry in Braj Bhaka and attained extraordinary skill in Indian music. The *Ma’āthir-ul-Umara* details an incident how ingeniously he out-witted the great Indian musician Gopal Nā’ik in the court of Sultan ‘Ala-ud-Dīn Khilji.<sup>86</sup> Shibli relates briefly Khusrau’s contribution to the synthesis of Indian and Persian music and shows him as the inventor of many Indo-Persian *rāgs* and *rāginīs*.<sup>87</sup> He is also said to have written some treatises on Indian music.<sup>88</sup> In one of his works—the *Nau Sipahr* ( III ) written in A. H. 718—he lavishes praise on India and gives ten reasons for the superiority of the Indians in science and wisdom over all other nations. He examines in a summary manner their philosophy, logic, astrology, physics, mathematics, astronomy and metaphysics. Of the Hindus he remarks : “In divinity alone

84. *Alberūnī’s India*, p. 246.

85. *Ibid.* p. xxxix-xli.

86. *Calcutta*, Vol. II. p. 479.

87. *Sh’ir-ul-Ajam*, Vol. II. p. 186-87.

88. *Life and Works of Amīr Khusrau*, Calcutta, p. 144.

they are confused, but then, so are all other people. Though they do not believe in our religion, many of their beliefs are like us..."<sup>39</sup> He also speaks of many languages of India—Hindu'i, Sindhī, Lahorī, Kashmiri, Dhur-Samudrī, Tilangī, Gujarī, Ma'-barī, Gaurī, Bengali, Oudhī and Sanskrit. Sanskrit, he adds, which with its "strange forms of grammatical irregularities in its orthography, syntax and literature," nonetheless, "is pure as pearl, inferior to Arabic but superior to Darī."<sup>40</sup>

39. *Ibid.* p. 188.

40. *Ibid.* 182-187.

## THE PRICE OF HUNGER \*

*By* RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SHELTERED by the throne far away  
The kingdom proudly flaunts  
The difference meted out to rulers and the ruled,  
.....Disaster it keeps hidden under its awning.  
Hapless the reign whose wide-spread tattered humanity  
Exposes the symbol of power to shame.  
Intolcrable suffering of multitudes  
Even if touches not the rulers—  
Draws at last the curse of Providence.

Where, under the shadow of great wealth,  
Starvation, semi-starvation, burn with hunger's fire—  
Where drinking water is impure and is drying up—  
Where in winter the body has no covering  
And the door of death gapes open—  
Where even worse than death, the living-death of lives  
worn to the skin  
Faces, day and night, the onslaught of disease, unchecked,  
All roads to recovery blocked up—  
There, in that realm,  
The innumerable dying are of no help to the kingdom,  
But a terrible burden.

\* Translated by Dr Amiya Chakravarty ( originally for the *Anrita Bazar Patrika* )  
from the Bengali book JANMADINE ( Poem No. 21 ).

The bird whose one wing is shrivelled up,  
Steady it cannot remain in the day of storm—  
From the high air it falls to the dust, broken of limb,  
—The day of reckoning comes.  
When sky-piercing possessions topple over,  
In the fragments of its skeletal ruins  
The abject penury which was of the destitute  
Builds its state.

*Udayan,*  
*January, 1941.*  
*Evening.*







# LETTERS TO W. W. PEARSON

( Continued from the previous issue )

*Calcutta,*  
*May 8, 1914.*

My dear Willie,

Many thanks for your kind greetings. I am getting ready to go to Ramgarh next Sunday where I hope Andrews will be able to join me.

Narabhup seems to have gone with the Badarikashram party without his guardian's permission. It is getting to be rather unpleasant and I have telegraphed him in Almora to come back. I hope it will reach him in time to prevent him going any further. . . .

With my love,

Yours affectionately,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Calcutta,*  
*May 12, 1915.*

My dear Pearson,

I am leaving for Ceylon tomorrow night, possibly for a further voyage. So I must take my leave from you and tell you that your beautiful life has helped me in my journey towards শান্তি, শিব and আনন্দরূপ<sup>1</sup> and that I have very deep love for you.

Yours affectionately,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Shilida, Nadia,*  
*Sept. 19, 1915.*

My dear Pearson,

It is not likely that I shall remain here till 13th or 14th. In a day or two my work here will be finished and

1. *Śāntam, Śivam and Ānandarūpam.*

I shall try to go to Shantiniketan without delay. I expected you and Andrews some time this week and I cut short my visit to the other place in anticipation of this pleasure.

But I must see you before you go and I should be very disappointed to miss seeing Andrews.

Yours with love,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

My dear Pearson,

I left Calcutta very tired. A doctor friend whom I met at Sealdah Station warned me to be very careful. But directly I passed Barrackpore the old man who sat on my shoulders relaxed his hold and when I got down at Kushtia I found he had come down looking quite young and cheerful.

You will be amused to learn that I have attracted a band of youths seeking adventure in this inaccessible corner of the world. They are Mukul, Nandalal and Suren.<sup>1</sup> Suddenly I heard their cry yesterday morning while busy at my desk—they seemed to be thrown up by the staircase from some mystery land down below into the region of light. They said "Here we are !" and I said "Here I am." I find these young fellows don't take my heavy age at all seriously—and the mischief is that I have got in the habit of forgetting my arithmetic with regard to my age. After the lapse of so many years it is useless for me to try to resume my proper age—I can't catch my fifty-five, hard as I may try—I am left far behind. I was fairly on my way to a dignified old age when I got stranded in the island of *Phalguni* where I must be content to grow grey with youthfulness. However, these three young beggars will not return home empty-handed when they go from here.

[ No MS. of this letter is available ; only a typed copy, unsigned. ]

1. Mukul Dey, Nandalal Bose and Surendranath Kar.

*Santiniketan.**Oct. 25, 1917.*

My dear Pearson,

Can you possibly imagine that I was nearly made the chairman of the Congress Reception Committee this year? It is distractingly comic to think that there was a great fight for the chair—both parties looking so fiercely earnest about it that the gods as spectators in the upper region were in danger of bursting their sides with laughter—particularly in the war time when the Czar of all Russia lost his throne without a word and Kaiser's crown looks terribly insecure. That I should be drawn into politics does not in the least degree prove that politics of late has developed undreamt-of poetical qualities,—it only shows that at present in India things have come to such a tangle that even a poet had to be requisitioned for the purpose of a mock fight in a political playground. I do not know to what tragedy or more possibly to a screaming farce it would have led us on if my fate had persisted in its practical joke to the end.

My continuous stay in Calcutta for the last few months was not a particularly exhilarating experience for me. Yet for all I know, it was necessary, not for my peace of mind, but for realising rightly or wrongly, that my mission of life was not for exclusively turning out verses difficult of comprehension. I was too long out of touch with our Calcutta people—especially with our students. In fact, as far as the Bengali public outside our Santiniketan was concerned, I had been living in a phantom world of a vanished generation. The present generation of our youth merely knows me as a man who has achieved his reputation. But an assured 'reputation gives a sense of finality to one's career. It no longer appears like a flame but like a splendid snuffer to the candle of life. It was like a railway train which had accomplished its end and reached its terminus, therefore no longer of interest to the passengers who were for beginning or continuing their journey. But this time I had the opportunity

to prove to them that I was on the running line and that the signal was down. Our students were rather surprised to find that I still had in me most of the properties of solid matter—weight, penetrability and the power of occupying space. So, like Dada of *Phalguni*, I am in danger of being surrounded by the crowd, made use of and even praised. I am feeling excessively nervous because I am beginning to be flattered by my countrymen, to which experience, you know, I am not at all accustomed. When misunderstanding lands one upon the Alpine height of praise it is more perilous for him than when it hurls him into the depth of calumny. I am waiting every moment for the downward push to roll back again into my normal position of unambiguous revilement.

However, I am tired. I wish I were in some Japanese monastery with you practising Zen. I have come to the conclusion that a poet ought to be a poet and nothing else. The combination of a *setar* and a fishing-rod in one may be convenient but such ingenious monstrosities should be discouraged.

But please do not imagine that my clouds had no gold lining whatever. We staged *Dakghar* (Post Office) in our Bichitra Hall, gave five performances and felt happier each time we did it. I took the part of *Thakurda*, Gagan<sup>1</sup> that of *Madhab*, and Aban<sup>2</sup> personated *Morhal* to perfection. The boy who personated *Amal* was glorious. He is a new acquisition to our school whom you do not know. We did miss you so much! I know if Andrews were among the audience he would have created a tremendous scene.

I had a letter from Andrews some time ago saying that he was coming back in November. I hope he will not change his plan. The absence of both of you is a sore trial to me.

I have just come to Santiniketan. The Asram is basking in the beautiful sunshine of Pooja holidays. One feels certain that it is all right with this great world when year after year

1. Gaganendranath Tagore.

2. Abanindranath Tagore.

such beautiful days find their way back to this earth without interruption.

I am requested to get ready an important lecture for the Congress occasion. But I sit quiet in my upper room and gaze on the ineffable blue of the sunlit sky of October and ask myself if it is absolutely required of me to coin political platitudes to buy cheap applause from a big townhall audience ?

My love to you.

Ever yours,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[ *No MS. of this letter is available : only a typed copy.*  ]

Dear Pearson,<sup>1</sup>

The place where I am living is unquestionably mine. In France the atmosphere seems to be full of a generosity of welcome making me feel that this country had made special arrangement for me from before my birth. You will be surprised to learn that nobody has laughed at me in the streets here, not even in the villages through which we passed yesterday on our way to the battlefields. These people are human enough to recognise that I am not utterly dissimilar to themselves though my dress is strange. They have that innate feeling of kindness in them which naturally forbids them to laugh at a stranger. But I miss you very much. I know there are things here that would have gladdened your heart. Our host<sup>2</sup> here is a great man with an unbounded love for humanity. He is one of the most influential financiers of the world, but wealth has not been able to spoil him—it has only given him opportunities for self-sacrifice. He is like a child who loves life not because he is born to money but to endless possibilities. I feel with a feeling of regret that you ought to have known him—for he is not a

1. The letter is undated. Internal evidence suggests that it was written during the Poet's visit to France in 1920.

2. M. Albert Kahn.

whit inferior to your friend Jean. My meetings and conversations with Bergson and Sylvain Levy also were full of delight. To them I could open my heart and offer my thoughts with an unhindered spontaneity as I had never done in England, not even to my friends like Rothenstein. Unfortunately, Paris is nearly empty and even in the beginning of October very few will return.

The letters that I lately had from Andrews made me anxious for him. I agree with you in your feeling that he should accompany me in my American tour. But in that case the gap should not be too lengthy which his absence will create in Visvabharati. Students from distant parts of India are coming to us, also our own students like Anadi are continuing their studies in Visvabharati. If their English is stopped in the very beginning of their course, even for a few months, they will be discouraged and will feel that our lessons are precarious, liable to constant changes and breaks. Try to secure your passage in some Italian or French steamer if English steamer is impossible and when you have done so we shall cable to Andrews. Your plan of travelling across United States and reaching India via Pacific Ocean is very costly and full of uncertainties. It is likely to cause delays unexpected and unsurmountable. Try the orthodox route and follow the commonplace methods. I have a painful feeling or anxiety lest you should think it fit to propose a trip to India in your caravan across Poland and Russia and Gobi deserts and Karakoram Hills.

I have so many things to say to you, but I forget when I sit down to write and then again I am lazy. I have given up Norway and Sweden and am going to spend the weeks intervening between my Holland engagements in South of France. I am sure Rathi will tell you all about it in details. Bring some packets of Nerve Nutrients when you come. They are very useful. With love,

Ever yours

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Dear Pearson,<sup>1</sup>

Since my return from Yama Farms I have had to be very busy with my propaganda work, writing about it, revising these writings, meeting people, struggling to save myself from being inveigled into plans of schemers cleverer than ourselves, keeping engagements and attending to tasks that are of no conceivable use to any rational creatures. Last night before going to retire I looked at my watch and found it was 20 minutes to three. I am tired. However, it seems that wheels are set revolving and the results, I hope, are not likely to be blank disappointment. I shall be leaving for Boston this afternoon where my days will be solidly filled with luncheons and dinners, lectures and talks. But I am happy to inform you that I have definitely refused to accept hospitality from that club whose members by some oversight of Providence have been allowed to overstay their terms of life and whose servants with their stare make you despair of your ever being able to come up to their standard of respectability. With the thickening of the plot of the farce of the five millions, my movements are becoming more and more uncertain, and I have not the least notion when I shall be at Chicago or anywhere else. I am in the hands of my destiny whose programme is written in invisible ink, which prevents me from filling my own engagement book with dates that cannot be rubbed out at the shortest notice. This makes it doubtful about my going to Starr Commonwealth and yet not hopeless.

Yours with love,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

1. The letter is undated, but was probably written during the Poet's visit to the U. S. A. in 1920-1921.



*Hotel Algonquin,  
59 to 65 West Forty-fourth Street,  
New York.*

Dear Pearson,

Luncheon and dinner and reception and speech—I see no end to this vista of dissipations. Yesterday I had lunch in New York, dinner at Greenwich from where I have come back this afternoon and am getting ready to go to the dinner at Mrs. Straight's. I must turn Buddhist without delay and strike at the root of existence—kill desire—and then engage a passage in the earliest steamer and go back to Santiniketan. And for you the best course should be instantly to return to England with boxes of chocolates, theatre tickets and other allurements and save Miss Bower from friends. But you doubt and hesitate and discuss and dream and wake up to find that chocolates have been eaten and curtain has been rung down before you have finally made up your mind. Most tragedies of life are owing to moments of indecision at the first or second act of the drama. Miss Bower in her letter to Bauma<sup>1</sup> is making constant reference to you, the latest of which carries a veiled complaint at the delay of your answer to her letter.

I hope it will be possible for me to reach India next autumn but I shall not associate myself with any movement outside my Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati. It will require all my wisdom and power of resistance to keep myself away from the passionate politics of the present-day India—but it must be done.

I have no গল্পসংগ্রহ<sup>2</sup> with me—Basanta Roy owns some stray volumes of it but they are inaccessible. So for your cultivation of Bengali you must rely upon প্রসাদ<sup>3</sup>, however exhausted its soil may become.

With love,

Affectionately yours,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

1. The Poet's daughter-in-law, Srimati Pratima Tagore.

2. *Galpa-Guchchha* (a collection of his short stories in Bengali).

3. *Prasad*, A memorial volume published in memory of Prasad Chatterjee (the youngest son of S. J. Ramananda Chatterjee), who was a student of Santiniketan.

Dec. 23, 1920.

Dear Pearson,

Yesterday it was 7th *Paush*.<sup>1</sup> Before leaving New York I had time to think of our people at Shantiniketan, join their festival from across the sea, and contribute to their united *namaskar*<sup>2</sup> mine own to Our Father. Light seemed to stream into my mind and I was urged to clear out all tangles of unreality that have been fettering our purpose.

The call which brought me to the West had come to me even before I fully understood what it meant. The mission is tremendously difficult for me and it seems that my strength is inadequate to carry its burden. But it is not for me to judge. The responsibility is mine and I must not hesitate to accept it. That I suffer in my attempt to carry out my task is no criterion of my unworthiness, but that I accept the suffering is the true test of my worth. নমস্কেতু—<sup>3</sup> I bow to Him and I accept, and at the same time I completely absolve others from enforced partnership who have other missions to fulfil.

You must have freedom, not only for your own sake but for mine. That I had been forcing you to a life from which you had been struggling to be free is a discovery which is the most difficult of all the burdens that I am bearing at present. It must not be allowed to oppress me any longer and make my work extra hard for me. I cannot tell how miserably ashamed I feel of myself when I retrospectively view the long continued suffering, I imposed on you not only this time but during our last tour. Now I fully realise how your repressed need of freedom violently led to a disruption at a ridiculously feeble provocation and almost forcibly flung you into the arms of M. Richards.

You know that I love you, and therefore any service you offer to me which is irksome to you is doing injustice to me. For thereby you give me something which is worse than painful

1. When the annual festival and fair are held at Santiniketan.

2. Salutation.

3. Salutation to Thee.

to me—it is something by accepting which I find it difficult to forgive myself ; which I could never accept willingly. But please know that the reason why I did not clearly understand your feeling till you ran away to Boston was not my selfishness, but my stupidity. But possibly it was the stupidity of unconscious selfishness which was to be uprooted. One consolation I have in my mind—I had earnestly asked you not to accompany me in this tour before we sailed. I was absolutely serious in my request. But mere good intention is not enough and so the judgment is against me.

You must have freedom to fulfil your life. You have greatness of heart, you have an abundance of human love, you will find your true path, you will reach your goal. Nothing that is discordant, that is unreal should hamper you in your fulfilment—this is my earnest prayer. With love,

Affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Jan. 1, 1920 (?)*<sup>1</sup>

Dear Pearson,

I have anxiously been waiting for your letter which has come and relieved me. I was afraid lest you should misunderstand me and think that I had written to you in a spirit of resentment. I felt that it should be my duty and my pleasure to let you have the fullest opportunity for doing the work that suits you best. You must find out your own vocation and without losing time prepare yourself for it. There should not be the least contradiction between your service of love to me and that to the world. But it is premature and therefore wrong to talk about our joining hands for a common object. The call for it must come and make it inevitable. Our own words may create unnecessary difficulties in choice of our fields of truth. Paths should be kept open and minds passive till the time comes

1. It should be 1921.

when there can be no doubt about the courses we should take. I strongly feel that your life is precious ; for you have rare gifts given to you by Providence, therefore it is imperatively necessary for you to find your fulfilment wherever it may be possible— no personal consideration whatever should stand in its way.

Our stay at Chicago will be narrowed by our New York engagements on one side—and Texas engagements on the other. Therefore we should devote all the days we have in hand to hunt for lucky chances in that land of gigantic possibilities. This makes me doubtful about my visit to the Starr Commonwealth.

With love,

Affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*These two translations were appended to the original letter.—Ed.*

I spent noisy hours in crowded roads ;  
Won my place in market ; till daylight  
waned, and evening came ; when sudden pang  
Startled my heart, and reminded me  
I had not yet crossed thy temple gate.  
Now I urge thee : “My forgetfulness  
Fill with thy grace, Master ! When at night  
Hurried flights of late home-coming birds  
Have been stilled, the last boat furled its sails,  
Call me in from all distracting lights  
To thy one great darkness, silent shrine ;  
Where to see thy face I must uphold  
This my timid lamp, this trembling flame ;  
Where to hear thy music I must bring  
My own reed to which I lure thy breath.

\*       \*       \*       \*

When I met you at the trackless tangle  
In the starless night,

My wish was to offer you my lantern  
Though you needed not.

When you passed along the path of insult  
Strewing dust with songs  
My wish was to crown you with my garland  
Though you needed not.

When the servants clamoured for high wages,  
And some cursed and cried ;  
My wish was to give myself for nothing,  
Though you needed not.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*March 20,*  
*1921.*

*Jan. 14, 1921.*

Dear Pearson,

I am writing this letter from Boston. I have done my work here and am going back to New York this afternoon. These few days have been delightful for me, having the daily opportunities of meeting with people who are so stimulating in their thoughts and expression—who are not merely good people, but who have depth of mind. For the first time since I came into this country I felt a sustaining touch of humanity. I am not a man of action, nor of business, nor of pleasure. I dwell in the world of thoughts and of creative activities, therefore my banishment in New York has been a period of continual starvation for my mind. But I must go back to it, and try patiently to bear my burden, an immense load of useless trivialities. I know I am free to gain my freedom this moment, but that makes all the more precious this freedom of mine to give up freedom. I had hoped to be able to start for Chicago on the 25th of this month. But I have accepted an engagement on the 3rd of

February at Washington and therefore my term of incarceration in New York will be prolonged till close to the time of my engagements in Texas. This will explain to you why it will not be possible for me to visit the Starr Commonwealth. I am tired and have heaps of letters to write—so I take leave. With love,

Affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Hotel Algonquin,  
New York.*

Dear Pearson,

You must have heard from Rathi that we have postponed our departure for another three weeks. And yet I am suffering from an utter disgust for raising funds. I cannot tell you what an agony of longing I am feeling to go back to my own quiet life and wash my mind clear of all traces of ambition for helping the East and West in etc. etc. etc. These phrases have lost their taste for me ; I am carrying them like a mother whose child has died in her womb.

My love.

Affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

My dear Pearson,

I am taking to the water tonight. I have been too long in this solid part of the globe. I have something very fluid in me which is in sympathy with things that flow. So I am going to my Padma.

I send you the note of hand duly signed. I hope to see you before long. With love,

I am yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Dear Pearson,

I have changed my mind. Leaving for Europe tomorrow. I am glad to be able to free my mind from the lure of dollars. I want peace, want freedom.

Good bye. I hope you will find here what you seek—strength, health and happiness. With love,

Affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*March 31, 1921.*

Dear Pearson,

We shall reach Plymouth this afternoon. I have missed you very greatly. Do not know when we shall meet again. I am afraid not very soon—difficulties will arise and distance will have to be maintained. However, I am longing for my terrace and my easy chair and wide sky overflowing with sunshine. I want to take a headlong dive into the fathomless depth of doing nothing. I wish you happiness and freedom and extension of boundaries in your kingdom of friendship.

Very affectionately yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan,  
May 15, 1922.*

Dear Pearson,

I have letters in this mail, also in the last one, from Europe in which the writers, some of whom have European reputation, have expressed their desire to come to us to learn and to teach. As they are idealists, they will find no difficulty in getting into the heart of our institution, in spite of our material poverty and many things that are foreign to their taste and habits. There is nothing in the least objectionable to claim co-operation from such people—as from Prof. Sylvain Levi, who loves us because he deeply understands and respects the ideals which we represent. He helps us with all his heart and soul and

through it he himself is helped. From the West we must not have anybody who comes merely as a paid teacher or who comes to favour us with his service. We have to be very careful in all our bonds of relationship with the West, for it will be demoralising to both parties if these are not ideal bonds. Somehow I do not like the idea of Mrs— trying to raise money to send a teacher to us. All true ideals claim sacrifice but never benevolence. I have more than once realised with a torture of my soul that the rich are apt to insult great ideas even by their wrong attitude of acceptance, for all their habits and attachments are formed in a world whose centre is their personal self.

We have had some days that were frightfully hot and I feel glad that you are away in a cooler climate. In all my past experience I never came across such a summer in Santiniketan.

Andrews has started this morning for Madras on a Visva-Bharati errand. I tried my best to save him from this torture but you know he chooses his moments of adventure when physical discomfort is at its highest limits. He will have a regular orgy of Madras heat, of crowded carriages, sleepless nights and, to crown them all, meagre results. But he thrives on them and will come back radiantly happy.

Give my cordial regards to M. Paul Richards and accept my love for yourself.

Affectionately yours  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan,  
June 2, 1922.*

Dear Pearson,

I can guess from your letter that some questions are troubling your mind about the best way of self-realisation. There can be no single path for all individuals, for we vastly differ in our nature and habits. But all great masters agree in their teaching on one cardinal point, saying that we must forget



our personal self in order to attain our spiritual freedom. Buddha and Christ have both of them said that this self-abnegation is not something which is negative—its positive aspect is love.

We can only love that which is profoundly real to us. The larger number of men have the most intense feeling of reality only for their own self ; and they can never get out of the limits of their self-love. The rest of human beings can be divided into two classes,—those who have their love for persons, and those who have for ideas.

Generally speaking, women fall into the first category and men into the second. In India this fact has been recognised and our teachers have pointed out two different paths for different sexes. It has been said that women can attain their emancipation by sublimating their personal relationships into the realm of the ideal. If, in spite of all obvious contradictions, a woman can realise in her husband something which transcends his personal limitations, then through her devotion to him she touches the infinite and thus is freed from the bondage of self. Through the luminous immensity of her love, her husband and her child reveal to her their ultimate truth which is divine. For biological reasons men's nature has had comparative freedom from the attachment to persons and therefore it has become easier for them to find direct access to ideas which lie behind the screen of things and which they ever have been pursuing in their knowledge and creative activities. Once you become conscious of some idea as the inner spirit of reality, as the higher meaning of the time, the joy becomes so unbounded that your self becomes obliterated, and you can easily lay aside all that you have for its sake.

But we must keep in mind that love of persons and love of ideas both can be terribly egotistic and therefore leading to bondage. It is constant sacrifice in service which only can loosen the shackle. We must not merely enjoy our love, whether personal or ideal, by contemplating its beauty and truth but must, by constantly working for it, tune our being in its music

and gradually get rid of all discords. We can only attain truth by giving expression to it in our life's work. Our life is the material with which we have to build the image of the ideal of truth which we have in mind. But our life, like all other materials, contains an obstinate antagonism to the idea to which it must give shape. Only through the active process of creation such antagonism can be discovered at every step and chiselled away at every stroke.

Look at the Santal women. In them the ideal of physical life finds its perfect development only because they are active in giving it expression in work. Their figure and their movements attain their beautiful harmony because they are always being tuned by life's activities. The one thing which I am never tired of admiring is the vigorous cleanliness of their limbs, which never get soiled even by the constant contact of dirt. Our ladies with their soaps and scents, washings and dressings, and incessant takings of care of their persons, only give an artificial polish to their superficial body ; but the cleanliness which is induced by the body's own current of movements, which comes from the blood, muscle and nerves, from the completeness of physical health, our women can never possess. The same thing happens with regard to our spiritual body. It is not by meticulous care in avoiding all contaminations, that we can keep it clean and give it grace,—but by urging it to give a vigorous expression to its inner life in the very midst of all dirt and dust and heat and hurts.

But I must stop and find out if I have given any answer to the question you have put to me. It may be that I have not, for it is difficult to know exactly what you want of me. You have spoken of impersonal love and impersonal work and you ask me which I consider as greater. To me they appear as one, like the sun and the light,—for love's expression is in work. Where it has no work there it is a dead world.

Affectionately yours  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan,*  
*July 8 [1922].*

Dear Pearson,

The typewritten part of your translation I have read and also some portion of your manuscript. On the whole it is all right, needing a few verbal alterations. I shall go over it carefully when the whole thing is typed. Rathi is furiously busy,— it will not be possible for him to type ; I shall take it to Ramananda Babu who will gladly arrange to have it typed. In the meanwhile you go on translating it.

You know I am invited to Ceylon which I shall visit about the beginning of October. On my way back I shall have to go to different places in the south in order to raise funds for Visvabharati whose finance has come almost to the fatal stage of anaemia. All this will occupy me till December and possibly I shall meet you in the Ashram when I come back. By that time your translation will be finished and I shall be able to revise it in collaboration with you. Ceylon expects from me some lectures and I dare not disappoint them, for on my part I expect something substantial from them in return. It is a hateful business for me to have to go about collecting money but as the main responsibility is mine I must not impose my burden upon others.

Yours affectionately,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan,*  
*Beerbhumi, Bengal, 1922.*

Dear Pearson,

I think it is a good idea to have your translation published serially in the *Modern Review*. Only I am afraid of any interruption occurring in the middle for some unforeseen accident. Let half of it be done before you venture to send it to the press. I believe that in English version some portions of it may profitably be left out, for I find that English readers have very little patience for scenes and sentiments which are

foreign to them ; they feel a sort of grievance for what they do not understand—and they care not to understand whatever is different from their familiar world. This is the reason why you find translations from oriental works in Germany and France and very few in England. This makes me think that after you have done with your translation it will have to be carefully abridged. *Gora* was written when Swadeshi movement in Bengal was at its height and therefore a great part of it may only have a topical interest.

It seems that rainy season has set in in right earnest after a long spell of intolerable heat. We shall have comparatively cooler days from now but you must not try to come down before the middle of October. For, I am sure that damp weather is far worse for your health than dry heat.

I am certain that you will need the help of some one from Bengal to explain to you the intimate pictures of Bengali domestic life which you will find in the latter part of *Gora*. Can you not get hold of some one in place of Anil when he comes away ?

You ask me what connection had the writing of *Gora* with Sister Nivedita. She was our guest in Shilida and in trying to improvise a story according to her request I gave her something which came very near to the plot of *Gora*. She was quite angry at the idea of *Gora* being rejected even by his disciple Sucharita owing to his foreign origin. You won't find it in *Gora* as it stands now—but I introduced it in my story which I told her in order to drive the point deep into her mind.

Yours affectionately,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

P. S. I wrote this letter some days ago and was under the impression that it had been posted. I found it today in a most unlikely place.

*The Atrai.*

Dear Pearson,

I do not know how the idea has got hold of your mind that your translation of *Gora* has not met with my approbation. Humility is a moral virtue and it may be good for you to cultivate it. But as I have my own morals to look after I must be speaking truth even at the risk of making you conceited. I need not be more explicit than this. *Gora* is a difficult book to translate ; many a valiant attempt was made by many a literary adventurer. All their efforts have broken down not very far from the beginning, strewing the path with the skeletons of unfinished chapters. The task of translating *Gora* has acquired a bad reputation like that of reaching North Pole. I feel certain that you are going to be the first to reach that distinction, not the North Pole but the English version up to the last page of the last chapter of *Gora*. From your letter to Andrews I feel certain that you have not received my last letter which would have dispelled all doubts from your mind as to how your rendering of *Gora* has been received by the author.

I have spent a few days at Patishar and am on my way to the Railway Station on my return journey to Santiniketan. Every time the discovery comes to me with a new surprise that soul needs its solitude to find its room, but the crowd it needs to find its field of work.

With love,

Yours

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

# JANA GANA MANA\*

## I

Jana-gaṇa-mana-adhināyaka jaya hē Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.  
Panjāba-Sindhu-Gujarāṭa-Maraṭha-Dravida-Utkala-Vaṅga  
Vindhya-Himāchala-Yamuna-Gaṅga-uchchhala-jaladhi-taraṅga  
Tava śubha nāmē jagē tava śubha aśisa magē  
gahē tava jaya-gatha,  
Jana-gaṇa-maṅgala-dayaka jaya hē Bharata-bhagya-vidhata,  
Jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya jaya jaya jaya hē.

## II

Aharaha tava ahvana pracharita, śuni tava udara vanī  
Hindu-Bauddha-Sikha-Jaina-Parasika-Musalmāna-Khrīṣṭani  
Pūrava-pāśchima asē tava simhasana-paśē  
prēma-hara haya gantha,  
Jana-gaṇa-aikya-vidhayaka jaya hē Bharata-bhagya-vidhata  
Jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya jaya jaya jaya hē.

## III

Patana-abhyudaya-bandhura pantha, yuga yuga dhavita yatri,  
Tumi chira-sarathi tava ratha-chakrē mukharita patha dina-ratri,  
Daruṇa-viplava-majhē tava śaṅkhadhvani bajē  
saṅkaṭa-duḥkhatrata,  
Jana-gaṇa-patha-parichayaka jaya hē Bharata-bhagya-vidhata,  
Jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya jaya jaya jaya hē.

\* In response to public demand and for the interest of our readers, we are glad to publish a transliteration in roman script of Rabindranath Tagore's famous national song, along with the author's own English rendering of the same, as well as musical notations according to the Bhatkhande system.

## IV

Ghōra-timira-ghana-niviḍa-niśīthē pīḍita-mūrchhita dēśē  
 Jāgrata chhila tava avichala maṅgala nata-nayanē animēṣē  
     Duḥsvapnē ataṅkē      rakṣa karilē aṅkē  
     snēhamayī tumi mata,  
 Jana-gaṇa-duḥkhatrayaka jaya hē Bharata-bhagya-vidhata  
 Jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya jaya jaya jaya hē.

## V

Rātri prabhātila udila ravichchhavi pūrva-udaya-giri-bhālē,  
 Gahe vihaṅgama, puṇya samīraṇa nava-jīvana-rasa dhālē,  
     Tava karuṇaruṇa-ragē      nidrita Bharata jagē  
     tava charaṇē nata matha,  
 Jaya jaya jaya hē, jaya rajēśvara Bharata-bhagya-vidhata  
 Jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya hē, jaya jaya jaya jaya hē.

## A NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION BY PROF. PRABODH CHANDRA SEN :

I. IN normal Bengali pronunciation the length or quantity of vowels is not fixed as in Sanskrit and some other Indo-Aryan languages, but depends on their position within the word as well as on some other factors. Bengali versification is usually based on normal Bengali pronunciation of vowels. But in some cases, as in the present case, the Sanskrit convention of regarding some vowels as short and some as long in a fixed manner is followed. In this poem italicised *a* ( indicating ā or आ ), *ī* ( ई ), *ū* ( ऊ ), *ē* ( ए ) and *ō* ( औ ) should be pronounced as long. But the vowel *e* ( ए ) of the word 'gahe' ( fifth stanza, second line ) is short and should be taken as an exception. The final *a* ( अ ) of 'Vaṅga' and 'taraṅga' ( first stanza, second and third lines ) as well as the vowel *i* ( इ ) of the word 'rātri' ( third stanza, second line ) should be regarded as long following the Sanskrit convention of taking short vowels at the end of a metrical line as long.

It should be noted that Bengali a ( as in jana, gaṇa, jaya, etc. ) is not pronounced like Sanskrit a ( अ ), but is like o of the English word *hot*.

The diphthong or *yugmasvara* ai ( ऐ ) in the words 'Jaina' and 'aikya' as well as all closed syllables or *yugmadhvanis*, such as sin ( of Sindhu ), ut ( of Utkala ), uch ( of uchchhala ) etc., should be regarded as long. Taking a short syllable as one unit or mātṛā ( mora ) and a long syllable as two units we have in most lines 28 units ; but in every stanza there is one metrical line consisting of 36 units. The shorter lines have a strong pause ( *yati* ) after the sixteenth mora ; the longer lines have a strong pause after every twelve morae. The first syllable ( Pan ) of the second line of the first stanza should be regarded as an extra-metrical syllable and should not be taken into consideration in the moric calculation of the verse.

II. The following peculiarities of the Bengali pronunciation of consonants should be noted :—

ṇa ( ण ) = na ( न ), *e.g.*, gaṇa = gana ;

va ( व ) = ba ( ब ), *e.g.*, Vaṅga = baṅga, tava = taba, but in duhsvapna ( fourth stanza, third line ) v is silent ;

ya ( य ) at the beginning of a word = ja ( ज ), *e.g.*, yuga = juga, yātrī = jātrī ;

Ṣa ( ष ), Ṣa ( ष ), Sa ( स ) = Śa ( श ) or *sh* as in the English word *shall*, *e.g.* animēṣē = animēśē, Sindhu = Sindhu, āsē = āśē, but snēha = snēha ( not śnēha ), rakṣā = rakkhā ( not rakṣā ) ; in the word gānthā ( second stanza, fourth line ) italicised *n* is not pronounced as such, it is only a symbol of nasalisation of the previous vowel—  
gānthā = गाथा.



ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY THE AUTHOR

THOU art the ruler of the minds of all people,  
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny.  
Thy name rouses the hearts of the Punjab, Sind,  
Gujrat and Maratha, of Dravid, Orissa and Bengal.  
It echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and Himalayas,  
mingles in the music of Jumna and Ganges,  
and is chanted by the waves of the Indian Sea.  
They pray for thy blessing and sing thy praise,  
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,  
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

Day and night, thy voice goes out from land to land,  
calling Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains round thy throne  
and Parsees, Mussalmans and Christians.  
Offerings are brought to thy shrine by the East and the West  
to be woven in a garland of love.  
Thou bringest the hearts of all peoples into the harmony  
of one life,  
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,  
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

Eternal Charioteer, thou drivest man's history  
along the road rugged with rises and falls of Nations.  
Amidst all tribulations and terror

thy trumpet sounds to hearten those that despair and droop,  
and guide all people in their paths of peril and pilgrimage.

Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,  
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

When the long dreary night was dense with gloom  
and the country lay still in a stupor,  
thy Mother's arms held her,  
thy wakeful eyes bent upon her face,  
till she was rescued from the dark evil dreams  
that oppressed her spirit,  
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,  
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

The night dawns, the sun rises in the East,  
the birds sing, the morning breeze brings a stir of  
new life.

Touched by the golden rays of thy love  
India wakes up and bends her head at thy feet.  
Thou King of all kings, Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,  
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

# MUSICAL NOTATIONS

## STHAYI

सा रे ग ग	ग ग ग ग	ग — ग ग	ग <sup>१</sup> रे ग म —
Ja na ga na	ma na o dhi	nā — ya ka	ja ya hē —
म <sup>१</sup> ग — ग ग	रे — रे रे	नि <sup>१</sup> रे — सा —	— — सा —
Bhā— ra ta	bhāg — ga bi	dhā — tā —	— — Pan—
सा <sup>१</sup> प — प प	— प प प	प — प प <sup>१</sup> म	म <sup>१</sup> प म <sup>१</sup> ध प —
jā — ba Shin	— dhu Gu j	rā — ṭa Ma	rā— ṭhā—
म — म म	म — म ग	ग <sup>१</sup> रे म ग —	— — — —
Drā— bi ḍa	Ut — ka la	Baṇ — ga —	— — — —
सा <sup>१</sup> ग — ग ग	ग — ग रे	प प प —	प <sup>१</sup> म — म —
Bin —dha Hi	mā — cha la	Jo mu nā —	Gan — gā—
ग — ग ग	प <sup>१</sup> रे रे रे नि <sup>१</sup>	नि <sup>१</sup> रे — सा —	— — — —
uch —chha la	ja la dhi ta	raṇ — ga —	— — — —
ग ग ग ग	ग — ग म	रे ग म —	— — — —
Ta ba shu bha	nā — mē —	jā — gē —	— — — —
ग म प प	म <sup>१</sup> प — म ग	ग <sup>१</sup> रे म ग —	— — — —
ta ba shu bha	ā — shi sha	mā — gē —	— — — —
सा <sup>१</sup> ग — ग —	ग ग ग <sup>१</sup> रे	रे नि <sup>१</sup> रे सा —	— — — —
gā — hē —	ta ba ja ya	gā — thā —	— — — —
सा <sup>१</sup> प प प प	प — प म <sup>१</sup>	प — प प	प <sup>१</sup> म <sup>१</sup> ध प —
Ja na ga na	maṇ — ga la	dā — ya ka	ja ya hē —
म — म म	म <sup>१</sup> ग — ग ग म	ग <sup>१</sup> रे म म <sup>१</sup> ग —	— — नि नि
Bhā — ra ta	bhāg — ga bi	dhā — tā —	— — Ja ya
नि <sup>१</sup> सा <sup>१</sup> — — —	— — सा <sup>१</sup> नि ध	नि — — —	— — प प
hē — — —	— — ja ya	hē — — —	— — ja ya
प <sup>१</sup> ध — — —	सा सा रे रे	ग ग रे ग म — — —	— — — —
hē — — —	ja ya ja ya	ja ya ja ya	hē — — —

## ANTARA

सा सा सा सा	सा सा <u>सानि</u> सा	रे— रे रे	रे — रे रे
A ha ra ha	ta ba āh —	vā — na pro	chā — ri ta
रेसा रे ग ग	ग ग — ग	रे ग म म	— — — —
shu ni ta ba	u dā — ra	bā — nī —	— — — —
मप — प प	— म प म	मप मध निधध	प म प प
Hin — du Baud	— dha Shi kha	Jai — na Pā	— ra shi ka
म म — म	ग ग रे —	रेनि रे सा —	— — — —
Mu shal— mā	— na Khrish—	tā — nī —	— — — —
ग — ग ग	ग ग ग ग	रे ग म म	— — — —
Pū — ra ba	pa sh chi ma	ā — shē —	— — — —
गम म प —	प — म ग	गरे म म ग ग	— — — —
ta ba sim —	hā — sha na	pā — shē —	— — — —
साग — ग ग	— ग रे रे	रेनि रे सा सा	— — — —
prē — ma hā	— ra ha ya	gān — thā —	— — — —
प प प प	मप — प म	मप — प प	पम धधप—
Ja na ga na	oik — ka bi	dha — ya ka	ja ya hē—
म — म म	मग — ग <u>गम</u>	रेम म ग —	— — नि नि
Bhā — ra ta	bhāg — ga bi	dhā — tā —	— — ja ya

etc. as in *Sthayi*.

*Rāga*—Yamani Bilawal.

*Tāl*—Dhumali (Chaturmātrika chhanda ).

Notation according to Bhatkhande system

By V. V. Wazalwar,

Santiniketan.

*The third, fourth and fifth stanzas follow the Antara.*

## REVIEWS

*MODERN INDIAN CULTURE* : By Dhurjati Prasad Mukherji.

India Publishers, 18 Tagore Town, Allahabad.

Price Rs. 4/ 12/-

SJ. DHURJATI PRASAD MUKHERJEE is well-known to the Bengali reading public ; and he has already acquired a reputation as a writer of stories and essays in Bengali. He occasionally writes in English, as most of us do, not with the object of enriching English literature, which we all know is impossible for us,—but in order to approach a wider reading public, in this land of many languages. English we all know, and we have an idea that serious subjects can only be properly dealt with in that language.

Dhurjati Prasad is a personal friend of mine. He is a man of wide reading and universal interests. His latest book *Modern Indian Culture* is in one sense a bold venture, as he has attempted to sum up Indian culture past and present, within such a small compass. The subjects he deals with, viz. Painting, Architecture, Music, Religion, Literature, etc., can only be adequately dealt with by specialists who have devoted their whole lives to the study of each. But the author's intention was to give a bird's eye view of the whole of Indian culture to the average run of educated men, and in that he has succeeded.

What I like best about this book is that it is free from all sectarian bias, from which specialists are not always free. I hope Dhurjati Prasad's book will appeal to a wide circle of readers and especially to those who have a curiosity with regard to Indian cultural life.

Pramatha Chaudhuri.

*POEMS* : By Rabindranath Tagore.

Published by Visva-Bharati.

Price : Rs. 5/- and Rs. 3/8/-.

ONE of the most remarkable publications by Visva-Bharati is *Poems*, a collection of translations from the original Bengali poems of Rabindranath Tagore. With the exception of twelve poems the translations are all made by the Poet himself. The translations done with unusual mastery and skill have all the charm of original compositions. It is interesting to recall how a very small volume of the Poet's translations had taken Europe

by storm thirty years ago. The present volume, much wider in its scope, brings within reach of the English reading public some of the best things ever written in any literature of the world. One can hardly deny that English literature will be very much the richer for these translations.

The poems, which are of a varied nature, cover almost the whole course of his poetic development from *Kaḍi O Komal* to the last poem dictated by the Poet before his death. There are 131 poems in all. Twelve of these poems are translated by Dr. Amiya Chakravarti. Himself a gifted writer, Dr. Chakravarti, in his English renderings, has shown how it is possible to retain even in literal translations some at least of the strength and beauty of the original composition. The appendix, we believe, will be of great interest to students of Tagore literature.

The first edition of the book sold itself out in fifteen months' time. This shows that the book has had to meet a genuine demand from the reading public. The present volume is the second edition of *Poems*. The book is beautifully got-up with a fine portrait-study of the Poet by Gaganendranath Tagore. The editors certainly deserve to be congratulated on this most laudable enterprise.

Hirendranath Dutta.

### *RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON RURAL RECONSTRUCTION :*

By Sudhir Sen, Ph. D., Visva-Bharati, 1943.

Price : Re. 1/8/-

"My thoughts on motherland which permeated my mind ever since my boyhood days," wrote Rabindranath Tagore in 1940, "have not been expressed merely in the rhythm of metres. I always tried to translate them into practice. And on this I staked everything. Not that I owned much, but whatever I possessed was devoted to this cause."

This little book is a study not only of those thoughts as expressed in words over a period of six decades but of the practical shape given to them in the various experiments at Silaidah, Patisar and Sriniketan. If the space and importance allotted to the former far exceed those allotted to the latter in this study, it is as it should be, for the words of a poet and seer are of far greater consequence than his actual achievements, which were necessarily limited by his lack of time, resources and the nature of workers who responded to his call. What is amazing is not that he failed to achieve what he would have liked to, but that he could achieve as much as he did, despite the limitations. That his mere by-products in the field of practical

service should have been sufficiently great and far-reaching as to place him alongside the greatest social reformers of modern times is in itself a marvel.

The present book, as its title indicates, deals with only one aspect of Rabindranath's thoughts on the contemporary problems of India. His thoughts on Education, Politics, Social Problems, etc. are naturally left out. We hope the present study is only the first of a series.

"Few people, even in his own province," says the author, "are fully aware of the value of his contribution in the field of rural uplift. Perhaps his dazzling achievements in literature and fine arts are largely responsible for this. For, as was but natural, they eclipsed his activities in other spheres. Yet without exaggeration Tagore was the father of the rural uplift movement in this country. He had become an ardent advocate of a thorough rehabilitation of rural life at least a generation before the Indian National Congress turned its attention in this direction." The author has quoted profusely from the widely scattered writings and speeches of Rabindranath, covering a period of sixty years, and has shown how deeply and passionately he had felt for the dumb, neglected millions of his country, how closely he had studied their problems, how unweariedly he had sought the way of turning this mass of inert, apathetic and rotting humanity into free, joyous and fully grown human beings. He was no believer in cheap political slogans or short cuts to the millennium : he knew that the mere change of the ruling class in India might make little difference to the destiny of the people unless the people were themselves made conscious of their rights and the dignity of their human worth. In his earlier writings he was inclined to trust too much to the power of the individual and of the social group and to underrate or even ignore the role of the State. Later on and gradually he came to realize how helpless the individual was in a modern state if the power of the State, far from indifferent, were actively aligned with those who were bent upon exploiting him. His visit to the U. S. S. R. revealed to him the vast potentiality of positive good in the power of a State consciously and actively concerned with the welfare of its people. This evolution of Tagore's conception of the inter-relation between State and Society is discussed by the author in Chapter IX. The discussion is necessarily cursory, for further elaboration of it would have taken him to the field of politics, outside the scope of the present study. Perhaps the utility of this book would have been greatly enhanced if it had formed part of a larger study of the political ideas of Rabindranath Tagore, for the two can no more be separated than can the science of hygiene from that of physiology. Within the limits of its scope, however, the present study is an excellent one. The author's grasp of the

fundamentals and his command of lucid and vivid expression make it easy and delightful reading.

K. K.

*TO THE HINDUS & MUSLIMS* : Gandhi Series No. 3.

Edited and Published by Anand T. Hingorani, Karachi.

Price : Rs. 6/8-.

No thinking Indian, no student of Indian politics, religions or any of the baffling social or economic problems that beset India, no lover of Mahatma Gandhi anywhere, can fail to appreciate the admirable series which Sri Anand T. Hingorani has been editing. This is the third of the series, the first two being *TO THE STUDENTS* and *TO THE WOMEN* respectively. All that Gandhiji has said or written about this the most tragic source of our national weakness will be found in this volume, from his early utterances in *Hind Swaraj* (1908) when he declared that "India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it" . . . . "If two brothers want to live in peace is it possible for a third party to separate them?" . . . . "The fact is that we have become enslaved and, therefore, quarrel and like to have our quarrels decided by a third party,"— to his very last utterance on that fateful day of 8 August 1942, which, unfortunately, could not be reproduced in full. The intensity with which he has felt the tragedy of this disharmony in the very heart of our national life and the earnestness with which he has striven to resolve it during these thirty-five years are apparent in every page of this book. In this, as in several other problems, vital to the destiny of their country, Tagore and Gandhi spoke almost with one voice. The future historian of free India, reviewing the tragic episode of this distracted period, will be amazed at the incredible folly of millions of our people who were deaf to the words, at once persuasive and warning, of the two noblest and wisest Indians of the century.

The book is well edited. Every quotation has been referred to the original writing and the date of its publication given. The index at the end enhances its value as a useful book of reference for all students of Gandhian literature. The printing, paper and the general get-up are excellent. The volume should find an honoured place in every library, public or private.

K. K.



### VYAVAHĀRANIRNAYA OF VARADARĀJA :

Edited by K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar and A. N. Krishna Aiyangar with a  
Foreword by Sir P. C. Sivaswamy Aiyer. Adyar Library  
Series No. 29. General Editor, G. Srinivasa Murthi,  
Vaidyaratna, Director, Adyar Library.

THE Hindu civic and religious life is guided by laws, handed down by tradition. The oldest form of these laws we find in the *Sūtras*, "*Kalpa Sūtras*" and "*Gṛhya Sūtras*". Then came the age of the "*Smṛti-Kāras*" or the writers of *Smṛti*, e. g. Manu, Yajñyavalka, Parāśara and others. After some time it was found necessary to have digests of law for the guidance of our lives. Then came an age of these digests or *Dharma-nibandhas*.

As compared with North India, South India has been relatively poor in *Dharma-nibandha* literature. Among South Indian digests those which deal with *Vyavahāra* are still fewer.

Three *Dharma-nibandhas* which principally guide the Hindu life in the province of Madras, are *Vyavahāra Mādhaviya*, *Smṛti-Candrika* of Devānna Bhatta and *Vyavahāra Nirṇaya* of Varadarāja. Their authority has also been recognised in the British Indian Courts. *Smṛti-Candrika* and *Vyavahāra-Mādhaviya* are available in prints. *Mitākṣarā* of Vijñāneśvara and *Sarasvativilāsa* of Pratāparudradeva, the King of Orissa, are also much respected in the province of Madras. They have also been printed. It is only the *Dharmānibandha* of Varadarāja that has awaited publication.

*Vyavahāranirṇaya* seems to be part of a bigger book, for we do not find *Mangala-Sloka*s either at the beginning or at the end of the book. Varadarāja says nothing of himself. We have to find them out from other sources.

Digests made in Southern India are very useful for the purposes of research. "South India enjoyed for centuries comparative immunity from Muslim attacks and their destructive effects. The libraries of temples, mathas and of Ācārya-Puruṣas in places like Kancipura conserved for centuries innumerable works which perished in North India or which were composed in South India itself." Many of the writers cited by Varadarāja are unknown to *Nibandha* writers of North India, and are not named even by Mitākṣarā.

To modern students, who are interested in the reconstruction of lost texts, Varadarāja's work has a special value. It abounds in quotations from works now lost. A number of sayings of Bṛhaspati, Kātyāyana and Śaṅkha-Likhita, not available in North Indian digests, are to be found in it. Another feature is the ascription to different authors by Varadarāja

of texts assigned to certain authors by other writers. Writers like Udyotana, Agnimitra, Dharmadropa, Nibandhakāra Kṛṣṇa are practically unknown now.

The merits of the *Vyavahāranirnaya* consist not only in its independence, and in some cases its originality in interpretation, but in its manifest command of *Mīmāṃsa* and *Nyāya*. The work is complete and self-contained. It is lucid and terse. His treatment was based both on tradition and intelligent reasoning. This book is not for beginners or for those not trained in the technique of legal literature. There is no attempt at parade of learning.

Both procedure and substantive law are dealt with, as is necessary in a compendium. The procedure in criminal and civil cases is not distinguished. It was not possible in small states which were existing in the time of Varadarāja (13th century). According to him, the Judge must be assisted by assessors who are to judge only of facts. Sometimes special assessors are necessary, suited to the nature and intricacy of the subject matter in dispute. The assessors should not overlook the action of the King if he is bent upon an unrighteous decision. Decision of the courts must be revered and appeals allowed when there is any suspicion of error, dishonesty or corruption. Varadarāja is very careful about commercial disputes. He has provided for depreciation. He knows trade with foreign lands. Profiteering, he says, is highly punishable. His speciality is the treatment of the inheritance rights of woman. He does not agree with those who deny women rights of inheritance and has very ably established his case. He also allows divorce and remarriage of women under some conditions. Hence this book is very important for students of Indian law and social history of this country.

The editor, Mr. Rangaswami Aiyangar, is a distinguished scholar. He has edited the *Bṛhaspati-Smṛti* very ably, and his editing work of *Kṛtya Kalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara is going on. He has proved that the time of *Vyavahāranirnaya* cannot be later than 1250 A. D. "The text is based on nine manuscripts which may be deemed fairly representative." The book has a full index of "*Pratīkas*"; each entry in the index is followed by the name of the author to whom it is ascribed in the digest. On the whole, the work has been very ably and carefully edited. The Introduction is both scholarly and helpful. The get-up is also praiseworthy and does credit to the excellent series of the Adyar Library.

Kshitimohan Sen.

*SANGĪTARATNĀKARA OF ŚĀRŅGADEVA* ( with *Kalānidhi*  
of Kallinātha and *Sudhākara* of Simhabhūpāla ).

Edited by Pandit S. Subramanya Sastri.

The Adyar Library Series No. 30.

THE *Sangītaratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva is the longest and most comprehensive work on Indian Music and commands the highest authority on that subject. For this reason it has been drawn upon profusely by all later writers on the subject.

Many commentaries have been written on this difficult work. An edition of this work was undertaken in 1879, by Kālivara Vedānta-Vāgīśa and Śārada Prasāda Ghosha from Calcutta. They knew of seven commentaries, of which four are in Sanskrit, two in Tolegu and one in Hindi. This book has seven parts. Only the first part was published by them in Calcutta with the commentary of Simhabhūpāla only.

Then in the year 1896 the full text of *Sangītaratnākara* was edited in Ānandāśrama Sanskrit series from Poona with the commentary of Kallinātha. Simhabhūpāla's "Sudhākara" and Kallinātha's "Kalānidhi" are the best known commentaries on this work.

Bhāskara the grandfather of Śārṅgadeva migrated to Southern India from Kashmere. Śārṅgadeva was patronised by King Siṃghana of the Yadava dynasty who ruled in Devagiri ( Modern Daulatabad ) from 1210 to 1247 A. D. So, Śārṅgadeva was proficient in both the Northern and Southern schools of Indian Music.

The Adyar Library has undertaken to edit this book with the two most important commentaries of Simhabhūpāla and Kallinātha. Unfortunately Pandit S. Subrahmanya Sastri who undertook this work could only see the first part of the book printed before his death. He was an erudite scholar both of theoretical and practical Indian Music as well as of dancing. Such a combination is very rare. So the Preface to this volume ( Part I only ) had to be written by Mr. Kundan Rājā. An English translation of the book will be printed when all the parts of this book are published. In the Introduction to this volume all the historical facts about Śārṅgadeva and the commentators Simhabhūpāla and Kallinātha have been given by the editor. In preparing this introduction and the "Anubandha" or appendix, the editor has been greatly helped by the introduction and appendix of *Sangītaratnākara* of Ānandāśrama series prepared by Pandita Mangesha Tailanga. The exhaustive treatment of Svarapvastāra ( pp. 293 to 393, nearly one hundred pages ) has been taken from that book and has been gratefully acknowledged by the editor of this volume.

In the first part of *Saṅgītaratnākara*, Śārṅgadeva has given the names of his predecessors (pp.1,1, 15-20). In his time the Indian Music had already two forms, the classical and popular (pp. 1, 1, 22). There were several styles of music as Kapāla, Kambala and others (pp. 1, 1, 36). *Saṅgītaratnākara* has described the creation of this universe and of this body, twenty-two Śrutis and seven notes ( 1, 3, 8 ). In the fourth chapter Murchanā and Tāna have been treated. Different modes of music have also been treated. That the seven notes can have 322582 varieties or Prastāra, has also been shown. An alphabetical index of the ślokas of this volume has been given at the end. The index has been very carefully prepared and will be very helpful to the students of Music.

The first volume has been very ably edited. The printing, paper and the get-up are praiseworthy. We hope, we will be able to say more when we see all the parts of this book published. We are eagerly waiting for its completion. Everyone who has interest in Indian culture will be grateful when the full work is published with the English translation.

Kshitimohan Sen.

### *CATURDAŚĀLAKṢANI OF GADĀDHARA.*

The Adyar Library Series No. 38. Price : Rs. 4-8-0.

WE have read with pleasure the first volume of *Caturdaśalakṣaṇi* of Gadādhara recently published by the Adyar Library. It is furnished with three commentaries and deals with the first two Lakṣanas. The other Lakṣanas will appear in subsequent volumes in this series.

Gadadhara Bhattacharya, one of the greatest scholars in Nyaya that Navadwip can boast of, is also known among the learned simply as Bhattacharya. In the 'Anumana' or 'Inference' section of *Tattvacintamani* written by Gangesh Upadhyaya, the originator of the Navya Nyaya or later Nyaya system, the 'Lakṣana' or definition of Vyapti has been discussed. In that section, Upadhyaya has proceeded to consider the Purva-Pakṣa and Sidhanta Lakṣana of Vyaptibada after having dealt with सिद्ध्यपरोक्ष-लक्षण and व्यधिकरणधर्माविच्छिन्नाभाव respectively. Of all the commentaries on Raghunath Shiromani's *Cintamani Dīdhiti*, that made by Gadadhara Bhattacharya and entitled *Dīdhiti-Prakashika* is the best and is known among-scholars as Gadadhari. The book under discussion begins at the beginning of व्यधिकरणधर्माविच्छिन्नाभाव of Vyaptibada. Students at present use an edition incorporating the whole text of Gadadhari, edited by Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Bindhyeswari Prasad Dwivedi and Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Bamacharan Nyayacharya and published in the Chaukhamba series.

A paper written by Kalishankar Siddhantabagish and intended to serve as an introduction to or commentary on Gadadhari has also gained currency among scholars. In publishing in the present book a portion of the text on Vyaptibada along with three commentaries hitherto unpublished, Pandit Santana Sharma Shiromani has earned the gratitude of all students and teachers of Nyaya.

The typographical errors are few in number and negligible considering the difficulties of editing a book like this. The paper and printing are good.

The title "Caturdasalaksani" is probably not very well known among scholars, but no mention has been made of this in the English preface written by C. Kunhan Raja. He might have indicated the specific portions of Vyaptibada as expounded in Cintamani and Didhiti that have been incorporated in *Caturdasalaksani*. I think, a preface in Sanskrit throwing some light on the title and the subject matter of the book would have added to its merit.

Sukhamoy Bhattacharya.

*ASSAMESE LITERATURE* : by Birinchikumar Barua.

( The P.E.N. Books : Indian Literatures ).

The International Book House Ltd.,

Bombay. Price Re. 1/8/-

IN her Editor's Foreword Srimati Sophia Wadia sets forth the aim of the Indian Literatures series as being twofold : (1) to help in the cultural enrichment of India by making it possible for educated Indians to become familiar with the literary wealth of Indian languages other than their own, and (2) to popularise the story of Indian literatures and to present gems from their masterpieces to the Occident in English translation. About a dozen volumes are to be published under this series in alphabetical order. Naturally therefore Assamese Literature features as the first book of the series.

The brochure under review gives a rapid survey of the literature of Assam, very little known or appreciated outside the Brahmaputra Valley which, we are told by the author, is 'Assam proper'. There are two broad divisions, the first dealing with what may be called the historical background of Assamese Literature and the second with the Modern Period, followed by a fairly long anthology, containing typical selections in prose and verse.

The author, associated as he is with the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, has devoted a good deal of space to the

first portion. After giving a brief description of the land and the language Sri Barua unfolds the fascinating story of how early Assamese literature began its career with folk rhymes, cradle songs and learned aphorisms of Dak. About the fourteenth century Madhav Kandali laid the stage for the great literary efflorescence of the succeeding century. In common with the rest of India, it was in the Middle Ages and in the wake of the humanistic fervour of the cult of *Bhakti*, that the golden age of Assamese literature came into being. Sankar Deva, the leader of the Vaisnavic movement in Assam, is the real father of this glorious renaissance. With him is associated the name of his disciple and spiritual successor Madhav Deva. During this period which began towards the middle of the fifteenth century and continued till the middle of the seventeenth, literature flourished mainly under the patronage of the kings of Kamatapur and Cooch-Bihar. Under their instance 'intensive and wide-spread stimulus' was given to the work of translation of a great number of Sanskrit classics. From the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century the Ahom court at Sibsagar remained the centre of learning. This was the age of secular learning and naturally Assamese prose became highly developed as a medium of expression about this time. From the year 1826, when the British took possession of Assam, upto the present extends what is called by the author the Modern Period of Assamese literature.

The above resumé aims to give an outline of the plan of the brochure under review. The author is to be congratulated on the consummate skill with which he has managed to narrate the most salient aspects of the story of the literature of Assam within barely more than fifty pages. His sense of proportion is irreproachable and the presentation of his subject very lucid. Lay readers are bound to draw both pleasure and profit from this informative handbook. The anthology is well chosen and the specimens given are fairly representative of the three different periods in the history of Assamese literature.

One thing must be noted here, however. Sri Barua has devoted an entire chapter to extolling the part that the American Baptist Mission played in shaping the literary destiny of the province. He says that it was as a result of the vigorous propaganda carried on by the missionaries that Assamese was restored to its rightful place from which it was ousted by Bengali for more than forty years. Be that as it may, Bengali remained a medium of instruction for a sufficiently long period to leave its impress on Assamese literature and this fact needs mentioning for the sake of historical veracity, if not for anything else. Good literature admits of no provincial barrier and to claim that Assam remained unperturbed and unaffected at a

time when her sister province made literary history, is to claim a dubious distinction. It is perhaps this narrow provincialism which explains why Rabindranath's works have never been translated into Assamese. Modern Assamese literature must needs cultivate that catholicity of view without which no literature can grow and develop.

That, however, is a different proposition. Sri Barua's book removes a long-felt want and we are sure it will stimulate interest among such of our countrymen who would like to keep in touch with literary movements in different parts of India. As such the brochure deserves to be widely circulated among non-Assamese readers.

Kshitish Roy.

*SOVIET STUDIES* : By Ela Sen & Alex M. Reid.

Thacker Spink & Co. Ltd.

ALL eyes today are focussed on Russia. She has received the hardest knocks in the present war and her magnificent resistance to the Nazi hordes is perhaps the most redeeming feature of this dismal war. One would naturally like to know what gave Russia the strength to withstand successfully the Nazi onslaught. Russia never bragged of a "secret weapon". Her weapon was the unconquerable spirit of her people. The book under review gives us an insight into how that magnificent spirit was fostered by her great leaders. This small book consisting of only 88 pages gives a most fascinating history of the astonishing development of what was once regarded as a semi-barbaric race. The book is packed with facts, figures, and interesting details about the Russian army, her educational experiments, the nation's health, Russian women and so on. Of the two authors one has travelled widely in Soviet Russia and the other has made a special study of Russian affairs. Books on Russia are very common these days. But this one, we can safely say, is one of the very best published in India in recent times.

Hirendranath Dutta.

*HOW TO BE A YOGI* : By Swami Abhedananda.

Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19B Raja Rajkrishna Street,  
Calcutta. Price : Cloth Rs. 5/-; Board Rs. 4/-.

PERHAPS the most significant and in a sense unique contribution of the Hindus to the heritage of Man is their undaunted and unwearied research into the spiritual possibilities of the human mind. Not content with mere

philosophic and poetic speculation, they reduced their experiences into a science and then applied it as the highest art of being. This they called Yoga, for thereby they attained union with the truth of their being and thus with the truth of the Universal Being. It is no mystery cult, but a regular science whose formulae can be tested in the laboratory of one's mind by anyone who has the requisite qualifications and the necessary training.

The present book is an introduction to the philosophy and practice of Yoga for the lay reader by one who had the good fortune of being a direct disciple of the Paramahansa, perhaps the greatest spiritual genius of modern times. There is a separate chapter devoted to each of the recognised Paths, Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga, and a special chapter on the science of breathing and one (since the book was originally written for the American reader) on "Was Christ a Yogi?" The book is written in simple and lucid English, and all technicalities have been avoided, so that the lay reader should have no difficulty in following it. But let not the reader be misled by the title into imagining that by reading the book he will learn how to be a Yogi. The book merely gives the barest outline of the syllabus; for actual training and guidance the seeker must look for a true and living guide.

The value of this publication has been greatly enhanced by the beautiful cover-design by Nandalal Boso. What even the words in the book have failed to convey of the superhuman majesty of this *sādhana* the artist's brush has suggested,

We wish the publishers had selected some other and more appropriate photograph of Swami Abhedananda than the one reproduced as the frontispiece, in which he is seen wrapt in meditation, wearing a white collar and a black *achhkan*, presumably tailored in America. Somehow we are not used to associating yogic *samādhi* with that dress.

The printing and get-up of the book leave nothing to be desired. We are grateful to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math for making available to the Indian reader this new and fine edition of this excellent work.

K. K.

#### *TWENTY PORTRAITS BY MUKUL DEY.*

Thacker Spink & Co. Ltd., Esplanade East, Calcutta, 1943.

Price : Rs. 5/-

AFTER a long spell of some twenty-five years Mr. Mukul Dey makes his appearance before public with his *Twenty Portraits*. True, his *Fifteen Dry-points* came out in 1939; yet we, to whom the memory of his *Twelve*



*Portraits* had not faded, were waiting eagerly for a natural sequel to that earlier 1917 publication. Long we had to wait, but what a treat the artist has at last given us in this dainty album of twenty portraits.

An early disciple of Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, Mr. Dey is one of the premier artists of modern India, and in that respect needs no fresh introduction to the lovers of Indian art. The *Twelve Portraits* (1917) had already established for him a reputation, very high and abiding, in a sphere of art that had inscrutably remained so long a scare, or should we say a taboo, to most of the neo-orientalists. Mr. Dey, with perhaps the sole exception of Mr. Asit Kumar Haldar of Lucknow, may rightly claim to be the forerunner, among the early batch of Dr. Tagore's pupils, in the realm of portrait-study. He is also perhaps the first Indian Etcher, having taken a thorough course of training in this line, as early as in 1916, at The Art Institute, Chicago, under no less an Etcher than J. Blanding Sloan.

The album under review, in its scope of subjects, is far more comprehensive than the *Twelve Portraits*, for, whereas the latter contained studies of only the representative Bengalis, in *Twenty Portraits* is represented personalities both from India as well as Europe. Out of these twenty studies eight are in drypoint, seven in pencil and five in red chalk. The period of their execution is fairly long, extending from 1917 to 1942. Thus, within a brief compass, this album records the course of the artist's development during the most significant and mature period of his career. And, doubtless, in it connoisseurs and critics will imperceptibly feel a clue to whither the artist's talent is moving, and towards what end. From a plethora of details in Portrait No. 2 (Sir Maurice Gwyer) to the amazing reticence of Plate No. 11 (Sir Francis Younghusband) is a unique flight, the latter revealing in a way the summit of portrait-study to which Mr. Dey's talent and workmanship are capable of rising. Indeed, a work of its type would have done credit to any acknowledged foreign master in this field. Among the other studies in drypoint, those of Mahatma Gandhi (No. 19), Abanindranath Tagore (No. 20), Albert Einstein (No. 8), and Sven Hedin (No. 9), are by far the best, the last one "done within fifteen minutes" as the artist himself says, being a rare specimen of speed and power in character study. Of his pencil and red chalk drawings, studies of W. W. Pearson (No. 7), Sir Dorabji Tata (No. 15), Warner Keventer (No. 18), Annie Besant (No. 4) and Sri Aurobindo Ghose (No. 1) are of special artistic merit, but in all fairness it must be stated that almost none of them excels the best of their type in the *Twelve Portraits*. We are afraid, the portrait of Annie Besant in this volume, originally a work of

*Twelve Portraits* period (1917) is perhaps a residue of that volume rejected then on ground of its intrinsic merit. Yet in the present bunch it shines out as one of the most spontaneous works of the artist.

As for the reproduction quality, the half-tone blocks, in their limited way, have maintained to a great degree the *tone* of the originals but not their *tint* in all its nuances. Drypoints have in that way suffered most; next to them the drawings in red chalk. But how could the artist help that, especially when he was bringing out, not a fancy-priced portfolio of very limited copies but an album which would be within easy access of hundreds of art-lovers of meagre resources. It is gratifying to note that this edition of the album makes available 1,000 copies.

A few accessory remarks and we have done. The literature part in every art album is an intrusion, even when it is accepted as necessary for the lay public, and here it should have been reduced to its factual minimum. This intruder becomes incorrigible in obstinacy when it repeatedly starts misrepresenting a name like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as "Mohanchand Karamchand Gandhi."

Nirmalchandra Chatterjee.

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## THREE POEMS\*

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

### I

If the long night of my sorrow  
Has crossed over to the far shore  
From the Past :  
Then, in the midst of new wonder, on a morning,  
Let the new question of Life arise in me.  
The old questions, which finding no answer  
Ever mock the bewildered mind,  
May I find simple answers to them  
In simple faith.  
——That faith which remains content within,  
Never contends,  
Brings conviction of truth with the touch of  
blissfulness.

Jorasanko  
15th November, 1940  
Morning

\* These three poems have been translated by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty from *Rogshajyay* ( Poems no. 10, 11, 18 )

## II

In the centre of this Universe  
Age to age, there gathers  
Terrible Unforgiveness.  
If, unaware, a single line errs,  
Through long passage of time  
Suddenly it destroys itself ;  
Where the foundation seemed true,  
Earthquake heaves in chaotic dance.  
Creatures came in hordes  
To life's stage,  
With ample reserves of power,  
That power itself was illusion :  
Intolerable grew its great burden  
Leading to self-annihilation.  
None knows, where in this world,  
Moment by moment, there accumulates  
Terrible Unforgiveness.  
Piercing through errors beyond our ken  
It reaches and rends firm threads of our relationships ;  
Mistakes of a gesture or of a gleaming spark  
For ever impede the path backward.  
Utter destruction this, at the bidding of the Perfect :  
What new creation will it reveal at last.  
The disobedient clay crushed, all resistance removed,  
Green sprout will come forth bearing new life.  
Unforgiveness,  
Supreme strength you are in creation's law ;  
Thorns on the path of peace, trampled by your feet  
Are laid low and defeated by insistent knocks.

Jorasanko

13th November, 1940

## III

My day's last shadow  
You have blended with the evening melody\* :  
Its tune will linger ever,  
While its meaning be forgotten.  
When, tired with work, the path-farer  
Will rest beside the road,  
Faint, this music will touch him  
In tender strains.  
Bending his head, in silence,  
He will listen, and only know—  
    In a forgotten age, far in some rare moment  
    May be there lived some one  
    Who found, what we seek  
    And cannot find.

Jorasanko,  
13th November, 1940  
Morning

\* *Multan*, the Indian *ragini* specifically named here, is associated with the day's end.



# MEDIEVAL POET-SAINTS OF INDIA

By N. C. GHOSH

It is rather venturesome to launch on the subject of Medieval Poet-Saints of India with mere amateurish study of the subject. Pandit Kshitimohan Sen of Santiniketan has made valuable contributions towards the study and propagation of the writings of these saints and in my long journeys across India and over different parts of the country, I often carried with me booklets containing the songs and hymns of these great Poet-Saints, Bengali renderings of the original Hindi by the Pandit, and I would like to acknowledge at the outset my deep debt to him in preparing this little monograph and the inspiration that I have derived from his writings.

In simplicity of expression, in depth of devotional fervour, in richness of thought, these simple songs and hymns are unique in World's literature, and as they are so little known still, I thought of sharing my delight in them with my friends and provoke some interest in a most interesting period of the history of this country.

One may think also that there is a certain amount of incongruity in talking about Poets and Saints, when the demon of war has already intruded on to the fair field of Bengal and when destruction and rapine are stalking over the entire face of the earth and whole civilisations are on the verge of crumbling away. But in times like this, is it not refreshing, is it not heartening to turn back once in a way to things of eternal value and dwell for a moment on these noble thoughts and rich heritage left to us by the Poet-Saints and do they not help us to sustain our faith in humanity after all ?

Casting our eyes across the ages, we find the cultural history of India beginning with the coming of the Aryans in the early Vedic period and gradually developing in all its manifold richness through the inter-action of its different contributory

factors. Historical materials point to layer upon layer of cultural endeavours and how they all seemed to have worked on the principle of live and let live, though in later ages, much to our misfortune, the spirit of toleration was gradually vitiated by invidious distinctions in the social and spiritual life of the country, and in course of time, brought forth the cancerous growth of untouchability.

While the early Vedic culture was generally exclusive, later developments, inspired by the 'Upanishads' and characterised by the predominant influence of *Jnana*, *Yoga* and *Bhakti* were more inclusive and we find numerous instances of foreign cultures coming to India and getting quite easily assimilated into the Buddhist, Vaishnava or Saiva sects of those times. An age of spiritual disintegration followed, when the cultural life of India stagnated for a while and the great spiritual forces, which characterised the earlier stages dissipated in mere repetition of one or other of the forms. It was at this juncture in the middle ages that a new force in the shape of Moslem culture appeared on the horizon of India.

Inspite of the political conquest of parts of India by Moslem invaders, and in spite of the spirit of proselytising that had characterised their culture, the invaders could not help being influenced by the ancient culture that existed in the country and the potency of the sword in proselytising and swallowing up entire races and communities that had happened in the West, met a definite check in India. With the Moslem invaders came a host of Moslem preachers and Saints to India and an interaction of living minds was set up in the country. The presence of rival faiths drove these mystics to an intenser life of search of truth behind appearances and this virtual challenge inspired at the same time the better minds of India to seek more earnestly the truths of their own faith and their own culture. Apart from the political conquest of India, the advent of Moslems in this country inaugurated a period of earnest spiritual consciousness both amongst the Hindus and the Moslems of those days.

Though there was nothing much common in the orthodox tenets of the two communities and hardly any points of contact between each other and their respective life flowed in two entirely separate streams, the free spirits and lovers of humanity from both groups, the Hindu Bhaktas and the Moslem Sufis, were able to perform the miracle and get the two streams to join and flow together.

This great band of free-thinking Poet-Saints headed by Ramananda and his twelve disciples virtually carried out a quiet reformation throughout the length and breadth of India and unlike the older spiritual leaders and exponents of the philosophy and culture of this country, such as Sayana and Kumarila, Sankara and Ramanuja, Hemadri and Rughunandana, who all wrote in Sanskrit, these Poet-Saints who wanted to stir and lead the masses took to the language of the masses and thus gave a literature of considerable value in the vernacular language of the country. The reformation, they carried out, modified the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness. It raised the Sudra classes to the position of spiritual power and social importance almost equal to that of the Brahmins. It gave sanctity to the family relations and raised the status of woman. It made the nation more humane, at the same time more prone to hold together by mutual toleration. It suggested and partly carried out, a plan of reconstruction with the Mahomedans. It subordinated the importance of rites and ceremonies, of pilgrimages and fasts, and of learning and contemplation to the higher excellence of worship by means of love and faith. It checked the excesses of Polytheism. It tended in all these ways to raise the nation generally to a higher level of capacity both of thought and action. From the time of Ramananda down to the eighteenth century or even later, we find a long and remarkable series of these Poet-Saints in North India, who handed on from one to another the lamp of an inward and a fervent faith.

Ramananda, born of an orthodox Vaishnava Brahmin family, towards the end of the thirteenth century, nurtured in

the traditional ideas of all the various schools of thought before his time, particularly of the Vaishnava school of Ramanuja of whom he was the fifth apostolic successor, vitalised these ideas and tenets with the love and devotion of his heart and founded a new path of spiritual realisation.

A spirit of sympathy for the lower castes and classes of Hindu society has been from the beginning a distinctive feature of Vaishnavism. To Ramananda belongs the honour of developing this ethical tendency to Vaishnava thought. With that genuinely spiritual touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, Ramanada admitted all, high and low alike, into the fold. By making itself accessible to the degraded castes his great message gave a new direction to the spiritual thought and culture of Hindusthan. This remarkable spiritual revival carried its influence far and wide and stirred the stagnant waters. It rendered the Hindu culture all-embracing in its sympathy, catholic in its outlook, a perennial fountain of delight and inspiration. Ramananda made light of caste pretensions and declared in eloquent terms :—

*Jati panti puchchai nahi koi,  
Hari ko bhaje, so Hari ko hoi,*

“Let no one ask a man’s caste or with whom he eats. If a man is devoted to God Almighty, he becomes God’s own.” He had twelve disciples and these included amongst others Ravidas the cobbler, Kabir the Moslem weaver, Dhanna the Jat peasant, Sena the barber, Pipa the Rajput. Two of these twelve were also women.

We do not come across many of Ramananda’s own sayings but the radiant personality of his disciples the men and women he created—constitute his living message. In the ‘Granth Sahib’ only a single hymn is ascribed to Ramananda but this single poem is a sufficient indication of his philosophy. This lyric poem records the reaction of his mind on an invitation to attend a religious festival :

“Where shall I go ? The music and the festivity are in my house, my heart does not wish to move, my mind has folded its wings and is still. One day my heart was filled to overflowing and I had an inclination to go with sandal and other perfumes to offer my worship to Brahma. But the Guru revealed that Brahma was in my own heart. Wherever I go I see only water and stones ( worshipped ); but it is Thou who hast filled them all with Thy presence. They all seek Thee in vain in Devas. If Thou art not to be found here, we must go and seek Thee there. My own true Guru, Thou hast put an end to all my failures and illusions. Blesset art Thou ! Ramananda is lost in his Master, Brahma, it is the word of the Guru that destroys all the million bonds of action.”

Of all the disciples of Ramananda, Kabir's name shines out the brightest. His is a remarkable character in many ways. His great courage and spirit of protestantism, his supreme love and kindness to all, his fearless yet humble advocacy of pure ennobling doctrines, above all his profound mystic poems and utterances, make him a most eminent figure in this medieval movement. His place in this movement is very aptly put in the popular verse to this effect :—

*“Bhakti Dravida upaji  
Laye Ramanand,  
Pragat kio Kabirne,  
Saptadwip naukband.”*

“Bhakti arose first in the Dravida land, Ramananda brought it to the North ; and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine divisions of the world.”

Kabir is very correctly regarded as the central personality in the religious history of Medieval India. During the middle ages, there was not in North India, a single movement of, freedom, whether spiritual or intellectual, that did not bear the stamp of Kabir's influence. There has been a great deal of

controversy around the question of his date, but most probably he was born in 1398 A. D. He was the son of a Moslem weaver. These weavers had formerly been Hindus, and their place was very low in the Hindu as well as in the Moslem society. Thus they were free from the burden of useless religious traditions and customs. In such a free and untrammelled family was this great soul born.

Though he led an intensely religious and spiritual life, he married and had a son by name Kamal who was also a thinker and a devotee. Kabir believed in simple and natural life. He himself wove cloth and sold it in the market like an ordinary weaver. He did not interpret religious life as a life of idleness, and held that all should toil and earn and help each other, but none should hoard money. There is no fear of corruption from wealth if it is kept constantly in circulation in the service of humanity.

How simply, how beautifully he gives expression to eternal truths. In one of his poems he says "Be truthful, be natural—Truth alone is natural. Seek this truth within your own heart, for there is no truth in the external religious observances, neither in the sects nor in holy vows, neither in religious garb, nor in pilgrimages. Truth resides within the heart and is revealed in love, in strength, in compassion. Conquer hatred and extend your love to all mankind, for God resides in all".

In these days when the question of union between the two great communities is so much in the forefront, it will be appropriate to recall some of Kabir's noble sayings on this subject :

"If Allaha is in the Masjid only, What of the World outside ? If Ram is there in the temple image, who do you think pervades this earth ?"

"The Lord of the Hindus dwells in the East, The Lord of the Moslems in the West, Why not O fool, search your own heart and find them there ? Ram and Rahim are all there".

"All the men and women on this earth are Thy image,

O Lord. Kabir is as much the son of Ram as he is of Rahim. Is he not Thy son, O Lord ?”

He sings in another of his songs :

“The difference among faiths is only due to difference in names ; everywhere there is yearning for the same God. Why do the Hindus and Mahomedans quarrel for nothing ? Keep at a distance all pride and vanity, insincerity and falsehood ; consider others the same as yourself, let your heart be filled with love and devotion. Then alone will your struggle be successful. Life is transitory, do not waste your time, but take refuge in God. He is within your own heart ; so why do you fruitlessly search him in holy places, in scriptures, in rites and ceremonials ?”

Kabir was not in favour of the useless mortification of flesh. He said “Be pure, live a natural simple life. The whole creation is within your own self, behold the Lord of creation there. There is no distinction of the outer and the inner, for all distinctions have been harmonised in Him who is beyond all distinctions. In this harmony are truth and realisation”.

May I just quote one more of his beautiful songs wherein the realisation attained by him is very vividly and beautifully described and his philosophy of life is summed up in a few lines :

“Though I have assumed many shapes, this is my last,

“The strings and wires of the musical instrument are all worn out : I am now in the power of God’s name.

“I shall not have again to dance to the tune of birth and death.

“Nor shall my heart accompany on the drum.

“I have taken and destroyed my bodily lust and anger ;  
Lust’s raiment hath grown old and all my doubts are dispelled.

“I recognise one God in all creatures ; vain wranglings on this subject are at an end”.

Says Kabir :

“When God was gracious unto me, I obtained Him the Perfect One.

“Turning away from the worlds I have forgotten both caste and lineage.

“My weaving is now in the Infinite Silence.

“I have now no quarrel with any one :

“I have given up both the Pundits and the Mollahs,

“I weave clothes and wear them myself.

“Where I see no pride, there I sing God’s praises,

“What the Pundits and Mollahs prescribed for me,

“I have received no advantage from and have abandoned,

“My heart being pure, I have seen the Lord,

“Kabir having searched and searched himself hath found God within him”.

All India knows the beautiful legend of Kabir’s death, how both Hindus and Mahomedans quarrelled for his corpse which the one wanted to cremate and the other to bury, how at last Kabir himself appeared before them in person and asked them to lift the shroud and look beneath. In the place of the corpse to their great astonishment, they found a heap of flowers half of which was buried by Mahomedans at Gorakhpur and half taken by the Hindus to Benares and burnt—“fitting conclusion to a life which had made fragrant the doctrines of the great creeds”.

The conception of God as the the One Great Love is the characteristic and most important feature of the Medieval religion and culture. Kabir, born poet as he was, realised and gave expression to this faith more vividly than any other medieval mystic and no wonder his influence can be traced in a considerable number of sects, of which the largest and most notable is that of the Sikhs founded by Kabir’s most famous admirer Nanak. Guru Nanak ( born 1469 ) of the Sikhs, one of the gentlest and most mystical of Medieval Indian Teachers, established the worship of the ‘One Great and True Being’. The social and reforming effect of the purest of Protestant faiths that he preached



could not but be great. A rude and scattered community of peasants and hillmen became a strong and well-knit brotherhood united by a common and ennobling faith. A race of primitive and untutored men became a heroic nation possessed of a strong and individual religious faith and fired with ideals of moral courage and independence.

The other great follower of Kabir's ideals was Dadu. He was born in 1544 A. D. and died in 1603 in Rajputana where his followers, the Dadupanthis, even to this day have their chief centre. The great dream of his life was to unite all the divergent faiths in one bond of love and comradeship. Dadu, like his great Master Kabir, was also a poet and his prayers couched in simple language were full of depth and sweetness. He taught : "Be humble and free from egotism, Be compassionate and devoted in service ; Be a hero, fearless and energetic, free your mind from sectarianism, and from all the meaningless forms and semblances of religion ; be forgiving by nature and firm in your faith". Dadu held a religious discussion with Emperor Akbar for over 40 days when the latter tried to find a basis of a Universal Faith.

It is extremely difficult within the narrow compass of a short review like this, to do even bare justice to this great band of teachers, scattered throughout North India who followed the great Masters. I cannot, however, pass on from this group of Poet-Saints without mentioning Meera Bai ( born 1504 ) the Rajput Princess, who turned an ascetic. One of the most noted of Ramananda's followers was Ravidas, the Chamar. It was under his guidance that Meera Bai completed her spiritual discipleship. She popularised the Krishna cult in Western Hindusthan and sang in the Braj Bhasa dialect of Western Hindi—the dialect of the districts of Mathura and Brindaban which has come to be looked upon as the poetic dialect of Hindi par excellence. Her charming songs have been perennial fountains of delight to millions for the last few centuries and are bound to remain so through ages to come.

The influence of the Poet-Saints that I have referred to above gave rise to various sects that arose in medieval India, the Sikhs, the Dadupanthis. These were fully protestant in character and reacted on the orthodox sects and reformed Vaishnavite sects also arose side by side. I shall just mention the name of one of the latter group, whose name and fame as a poet of the highest order remain untarnished today—I mean Tulsi Das, the author of the Hindi Ramayana and Vinay Patrika. If the poems of Kabir form the high watermark of the more rational and protestant faith, the Ramayana of Tulsi Das is the greatest expression of the more orthodox Vaishnavism. The Ramayana is not, however, void of a power of appeal even to the protestant sects. Even as Dante summed up the thought and faith of medieval catholicism in his great Epic, so also Tulsi Das has summed up all the longing and philosophy of medieval Vaishnavite India. Out of all the spiritual rapture and yearning of Medieval India, represented by various sects, Vaishnavite and protestant, the Ramayana of Tulsi Das rises as some great piece of Divine Music.

Let me conclude by coming nearer home and mentioning how Vidyapati and Chandidas sang of the Krishna cult in Bengal about the same time as Kabir was flourishing in Central India. The devotion and emotional fervour of their writings are unparalleled in world's literature. Following these Poet Saints in Bengal, the Great Chaitanya taught of a merciful God and of the path of devotion and roused Bengal from its slumbers.

In the teachings of all these great-Saints in India, we find a basis of universal brotherhood which may yet have a message for the world after it emerges out of the present cataclysm and a new order in spirit and in substance replaces the present order based on greed and selfishness.

# THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF ASOKA

By PRABODH-CHANDRA SEN

IN these days of acute communal strife it may be helpful to discuss certain facts of Indian history which are likely to throw light on the solution of our present problem. Asoka, the famous Maurya monarch, is regarded on all hands as one of the best rulers not only in India but in all history. In the present article an attempt is made to ascertain the exact character of the religious policy of this great ruler, as also the effects of that policy on the political and national life of India, which, I fear, have not yet been properly discussed by our historians. It is necessary to state at the outset that the legends about Asoka found in Buddhist literature are not regarded by thinking scholars as a safe basis for a reliable history of the great emperor. The only sound foundation for such a history is to be found in his numerous and most remarkable inscriptions, which, V. A. Smith rightly says, "constitute in large measure his autobiography written in terms manifestly dictated by himself." I shall, therefore, depend exclusively on these inscriptions in my attempt at a proper appreciation of Asoka's religious policy.

It is stated in one of the best text-books prescribed for our young students that ever since he became a Buddhist after the Kalinga War Asoka "made it the business of his life to propagate the new faith...He organised a powerful system of missions to carry the teaching of the Buddha not only to the distant corners of India, but also to the territories of his Ceylonese and Greek contemporaries...The propaganda in India was entrusted to imperial officials, and new functionaries called *Dharma-Mahāmātras* were specially created for the purpose" (*The Groundwork of Indian History* by Sen & Raychaudhuri). Similar statements are met with in most of such text-books. If it be true that Asoka was an ardent and

active patron of Buddhism and used his officials and state-resources for an extensive propaganda on behalf of Buddhism, his religious policy would not really deserve the praises that have been bestowed on it and he can never be extolled as a wise ruler or statesman. We know from contemporary Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain literature as well as from the inscriptions of Asoka himself (e. g., Rock Edict XII) that it was an age of intense religious unrest, "when religious feeling ran high," the different communities attacking one another in very strong language. It would be highly impolitic, to say the least, on the part of Asoka to take sides in this religious strife and to extend his patronage to Buddhism to the exclusion of other religious systems; and it would not also be in keeping with the noble tradition of a typically ideal Indian king who must remain impartial and hold the balance even among the different religious communities (V. A. Smith's *Early History of India*, 4th ed., p. 188, footnote 1).

But did Asoka, like the great Mughal emperor, Aurangzib, whose aim was to convert his Indian empire into a "land of the faithful" (*dar-ul-Islam*), really use his imperial position as well as the state-machinery for promoting the cause of his personal religious faith and thus turn his own empire, if not also the dominions of his western *Yavana* neighbours, into something like a *dar-ul-Buddhism*? Let us see if this very common notion about the missionary zeal of Asoka is borne out by the evidence of his excellent inscriptions.

The most important inscription throwing light on the religious policy of Asoka is his Rock Edict No. 12. It would, therefore, serve our purpose best if we reproduce here in full an English version of it and let it speak for itself. It is as follows :

"King Priyadarsin, Beloved of the gods (*devānām priyah*), honours (*pūjayati*) men of all sects (*pāṣaṇḍa*), ascetics and householders, with gifts and manifold honour. But the Beloved of the gods does not care so much for gifts and honour as that

there should be a growth of the essence (*sāra*) among (men of) all sects. The growth of the essence (of religion), however, is of various kinds. But the root of it is restraint of speech, to wit, a man must not honour (*i. e.*, praise) his own sect (*ātmapāṣaṇḍapūjā*) or disparage that of another (*para-pāṣaṇḍagarhā*) without reason (or occasion)...because sects of other people all deserve to be honoured for one reason or another.

By thus acting one exalts one's own sect and (at the same time) does service to the sects of other people. By acting otherwise one hurts one's own sect and does harm to another sect. For he who honours his own sect, while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, in order to enhance the glory of his own sect, in reality by such conduct severely injures his own sect.

Concourse (*samavāya*, that is, meeting together, assembling) is therefore commendable in order that people may listen and desire to listen (further) to one another's *Dharma*. For this is the desire of the Beloved of the gods that all sects should be well-informed (about the doctrines of other communities and thus) be conducive of good.

Wherefore the adherents of all sects should be informed that the Beloved of the gods does not care so much for gifts or honour as that there should be a growth of the essence (of religion) among all sects and also mutual appreciation.

For this purpose are employed the *Dharma-Mahāmātras*... and other bodies (of officials). And this is its fruit, the growth of one's own sect and the illumination of *Dharma*."

It is clear from this inscription that in Asoka's time the various religious sects (the most important of them being those of the *Deva*-worshipping Brahmanists, the Ājivikas, *i. e.*, the followers of Gosāla Mankhaliputta, the Nirgranthas or Jainas, and the Buddhists, the only sects which find mention in the inscriptions) were far from regardful towards one another and restraint of speech seems to have been a rare thing in their

mutual criticism ; and Asoka, far from espousing the cause of any one of these warring communities, declared in most unambiguous words his equal regards for, and bestowed his impartial patronage on, all of them. Not only this, in order to bring about peace and harmony among these communities, Asoka, on the one hand, discouraged the prevalent spirit of *ātmapāṣaṇḍapūjā* ( extolling one's own community ) and that of *parapāṣaṇḍagarhā* ( disparaging that of others ) and, on the other, stressed the necessity of *samavāya* or concourse, between people of different faiths for religious discussion but with requisite restraint of speech so that such discussion might lead to mutual appreciation, for, according to him, every sect deserved to be honoured for one reason or another. Above all he emphasised the necessity of caring only for the *sāra* or essential elements of religion rather than for their external or ceremonial aspects, because in their essence all religions are one and the same, their sectarian differences being manifest only in certain non-essential dogmas and practices. This *sāra* or essence common to all religions has been called *Dharma* by Asoka, and it is to the growth of this essential *Dharma* among his people that Asoka devoted his life, and *Dharma-Mahāmētras* and other officials were appointed for this purpose. After the Kalinga War, Asoka, as we all know, gave up for ever the traditional Magadhan policy of *Digvijaya*, i. e., policy of acquiring new territories by military conquest, and replaced it by the noble ideal of winning people's hearts by the gift of *Dharma*, which he loved to call *Dharmavijaya* or moral conquest. What, according to the imperial idealist, constituted *Dharma* has been repeatedly explained by him in the inscriptions. Briefly speaking it consisted of certain moral or social duties ( e. g., obedience to parents, teachers and elders, due respect and liberality towards Brāhmaṇas and Sramaṇas, courtesy towards friends and relatives, kind treatment of slaves and servants, toleration for and appreciation of creeds other than one's own, and kindness towards living creatures and consequent abstention from sacrificial slaughter of or physical violence to them )

as well as certain ethical virtues, such as truthfulness, compassion, liberality, gratefulness, mastery over the senses, and purity of mind. Dr. R. C. Majumdar has rightly remarked that "The aspect of *dharma* which he (Asoka) emphasised, was a code of morality rather than a system of religion" (*Ancient Indian History and Civilization*, p. 210). These moral duties and virtues which formed the core of Asoka's *sāra-dharma* cannot in any way be described as Buddhism, and V. A. Smith is no doubt right when he says that "the morality inculcated was, on the whole, common to all the Indian religions" (*Oxford History of India*, p. 108). As a matter of fact Asoka himself was quite aware of this character of his favourite *dharma*, and this is why he has called it the *porāṇa pakiti* (Minor Rock Edict II), the ancient rule or standard of piety which has been explained by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri as "the common heritage of Indians of all denominations" (*Political History*, 4th ed., p. 280).

Asoka not only asked his subjects to abstain from speaking evil of their neighbours' faith and to show toleration for and sympathy with the beliefs of others, but openly declared that he himself set the example by doing reverence to men of all sects by means of donations and in other ways. That he was sincere in his professions is believed by all modern historians. V. A. Smith says, "The Cave Inscriptions, which record costly gifts bestowed upon the Ājivikas, ... testify that Asoka, like many other ancient kings of India, really adopted the policy of *universal toleration*" (*Early History of India*, 4th Ed., p. 187-88). Now, the monarch, who not only professed the policy of universal toleration but practised it, who not only deprecated the spirit of *ātma-pāṣaṇḍapūjā* and *parapāṣaṇḍagarhā* but extolled the virtue of mutual appreciation in matters religious, and who not only stressed the necessity of concourse (*samavāya*) and consequent concord among the different communities but asked them to overlook the externals of religion and stick to the essentials which formed the common plank for all the sectarian faiths, cannot in any way be supposed to be a zealous propagandist in favour of any such

denominational religion. This conclusion based wholly on the evidence of a single inscription (*viz.*, Rock Edict XII) is fully justified by all the rest of Asoka's epigraphs. There is not a single hint in any of his numerous inscriptions which can be construed to show that Asoka ever deviated in the slightest degree from the traditional Indian policy of universal toleration and inclined to show special favour to any particular denomination. Later Buddhist traditions no doubt fondly describe Asoka as an imperial Buddhist missionary who placed his whole life and empire at the service of Buddhism, but they find no corroboration from the inscriptions and therefore must be discarded as mere fabrications of later monkish imagination. So it must be admitted that the current belief about Asoka's missionary zeal in favour of Buddhism so strongly held by many and so bluntly stated in the text-books has no basis whatsoever. This is why Dr. Raychaudhuri has admitted that though himself an ardent and devout Buddhist "Asoka probably never sought to impose his purely sectarian belief on others" (*ibid.*, p. 280).

This discussion, I hope, is enough to show that Asoka's religious policy was not only in keeping with the Indian tradition of impartiality on the part of an ideal king but also in conformity with all other known facts about him, his genuine benevolence and ceaseless efforts for the welfare of all his subjects irrespective of creed, caste and even race—his benevolent attitude towards the *Yavanas* is well-known. To sum up, though personally a sincere believer in the teachings of the Buddha Asoka as a king thought it his duty to extend his patronage equally to all the *pāṣaṇḍas* or religious sects of his time and strove his best to bring about real unity and harmony among them on the fundamental basis of the common elements or *sāra* of all religions.

As we have said before, Asoka was not unique in Indian history in his attitude of impartiality and equal patronage towards the various religious sects; indeed such an attitude was a common feature of the religious policy of most of the ancient rulers of India. To cite only a few cases, we may mention the



names of the Kushāṇa rulers, the great Gupta emperors, and Harshavardhana. Kanishka, the Kushāṇa Emperor (78-101 A. C.), as is well-known, is regarded as a second Asoka in Buddhist literature for his deep devotion to the teachings of the Sākya Sage. But his coins conclusively prove that to the end of his reign he continued to show honour to Siva, Sun, Moon, Fire and such other Indian and non-Indian gods, who were worshipped in his far-flung empire. The great Gupta monarchs, viz. Chandragupta Vikramāditya, Kumāragupta, and Skandagupta, "although officially Brahmanical Hindus with a special devotion to Viṣṇu, followed the *usual practice* of ancient India in looking with a favourable eye on all varieties of Indian religion including Buddhism and Jainism" ( V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th ed., p. 325 ). Harshavardhana ( 606-47 A. C. ) also, though primarily a worshipper of Siva, did not hesitate to bestow his devotions to the Buddha as well as the Sun.

This tradition of royal toleration of all creeds was so deeply ingrained in the Indian mind that, after a period of intense intolerance and persecution in the middle ages, that is, soon after the Turkish Muslim conquest of India, this spirit of impartiality and equal patronage showed itself even among Muslim kings with renewed vigour and with an effulgence which was all the more glorious because of the greater contrast between Hinduism and Islam than between the different sects of Hinduism. The most remarkable name among such tolerant and liberal Muslim kings is perhaps that of Zainu-l Abidin ( 1417-1467 ) of Kasmir who anticipated the wise religious policy of Akbar by more than one hundred years.

# MUNSHI PREMCHAND : AN ARTIST OF THE SOIL

By MADAN GOPAL

THE last half a decade has been very fateful in the history of Indian literature. At the dawn of 1936, India could boast of a galaxy of great writers. By the end of 1941, however, all of them had gone. The last to arrive and the first to go was Premchand, the supreme and undisputed master of Hindustani literature, ( both Persian and Devanagari scripts ), having to his credit over 225 short-stories many of which are first-rate work, and over a dozen stout volumes of novels, which, even with their slight faults, remain the best that Hindustani literature can boast of.

There is yet another reason which accounts for Premchand's unique position in Hindustani literature. He is not merely a landmark ; he is also the pioneer and the standard-bearer of the modern tendencies in Hindustani literature. For, at the time when he entered the literary arena, in 1901, it had absolutely no contact with real life,—living in a world, as it did, of medieval patriarchs and queens, courtiers and courtesans, all of whom belonged to a sort of fairy land. It was Premchand who brought it in gear with life.

The origins of Dhanpat Rai Srivastava, better known by his pen-name Premchand, were extremely modest. Born in August, 1881, at Mundhwa Lamhi, a small village on the outskirts of Benares, he belonged to a family of Kayasthas, the pen-and-ink-warrior caste of India. There, in the village school, conducted in the mosque by the Moulvie, a goldsmith by vocation, Premchand had his early schooling, acquiring an early and firm hold on life that he must have led in the village is reflected in such of Persian. His stories as *Qazxāki*, *Ghori*, *Ram-Lila*, wherein the familiar scenes of the life in the village are brought back to us, with much greater realism than the autobiographical touches in

such stories as *Shikwā O Shikāyat* or *Gītā*, *Adib Ki Izzat* or *Lekhak*, *Lāl Feetā*, *Shikast Ki Fateh* and many others.

Premchand's father, Ajaib Lal, inherited a small piece of land, which would not yield enough. He was forced to take up a job in the Posts and Telegraph Department, wherein he rose to be the post-master of a petty post office, getting, perhaps, in the evening of his life, less than Rs. 20/- a month. So far as can be ascertained, there was never any intimacy between the father and the son, who, however, followed him from place to place, where he had his schooling.

Premchand's real education, however, was in the school of life. The book that he read was the book of books, the Book of Life. Poverty and Adversity were his teachers.

His mother, who, as he himself says, "was as affectionate and tender as all mothers are, and, when occasion arose, as stern," died when he was only eight. Throughout his writings, one finds affectionate and touching tributes to motherly love.

On her death, however, Ajaib Lal re-married, only to leave to his young son, whom too he had got married at the age of fourteen, the burden of supporting a wife, a step-mother and a half-brother. Premchand was barely fifteen, reading in the 9th class. There was not a penny in the house and, therefore, Premchand was called upon not only to pay his way towards education, but also to feed four hungry mouths. Daily he trekked ten miles to earn some five rupees a month as a coach. Such were the trying circumstances in which he passed his Matriculation, to be refused admission to college for he had secured only a second division and was very weak at mathematics.

Premchand had pitched his ambitions high, too high, indeed, for his means. He wanted to take a Master's degree and also to qualify for Law. But poverty is a sin and, as he himself admits : "My feet were chained to the earth, while I wanted to climb the Everest."

Still leaner days were in store for Premchand. The clouds showed no signs of thinning. He shifted to Benares, where he

earned Rs. 5/- per month, half of which sum he sent home regularly. Many a time and for many a day he had to forego even his usual one meal a day. Once, when he had not had even one bite for three days, he took, as a last resort, his arithmetic book, perhaps his only valuable possession,—to the bazaar to sell it off. And there Fate met him, in the person of the headmaster of a school, who was in search of a teacher. Taking pity on this brilliant but starving lad, he employed him on Rs. 18/- p. m.

This trouble over, another one raised its head. His wife, who has been described as “unmannered and uncultured,” did not prove a happy companion. “She was,” says Premchand, “an unfortunate woman, not at all good looking and, although not satisfied with her, I pulled on uncomplainingly, just as all *traditional* husbands do” (*italics mine*). By leaving him, in face of all his protestations, she sealed her own fate. Some time later, he was prevailed upon to marry for the second time. It was not without great difficulty that he agreed. But ever of an independent mind—a trait that gained strength with the passage of years—he said he would marry none but a widow, preferably a child widow. And this he did, at great danger to his own life. This second marriage, however, proved very happy. Junior Mrs. Premchand, then an illiterate girl and now a writer of no mean merit, gave him four children, and has outlived her husband. Those who have come into contact with her speak volumes for the nobility of her temperament.

Soon after Premchand joined the teaching profession, he got a job in a Government school. In 1904, he passed the examination for Junior Teachers Certificate, qualifying both in Urdu and Hindi. Before long, he became a Sub-Deputy Inspector of Schools, and was posted in Bundhelkhand. Travelling, however, did not suit him; he contracted an acute form of dysentery, which ultimately proved fatal. He got himself transferred to Basti, where he passed his F. A. Examination, as a private candidate. It is significant that he could do so only in 1909 when Mathematics became an optional subject. It

may be mentioned here that in his Teachers' Certificate it was stated : "Not qualified to teach Mathematics." In Premchand's actual life, his business acumen proved very low and contributed not a little to his troubles.

His health, however, showed no signs of improvement at Basti, and he had to get himself transferred to the Government Normal School, Gorakhpur, as a second assistant, a post which he resigned in 1921, in sympathy with Gandhiji's Satyagraha movement. Here at Gorakhpur, in 1919, he took his Bachelor's degree.

Premchand was born at a time when the whole of India was in the throes of intellectual, social and religious ferment, brought about by such forces as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, Swami Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Yet another nascent force, which later inundated and eclipsed all others, was the Indian National Congress, founded only five years after Premchand's birth. All these influences had their share in the orientation of Premchand's mind. About 1905, when the Congress met at Benares and sanctioned a boycott of foreign goods, we find Premchand writing articles in the monthly *Zamānā*, Cawnpore, bearing on such problems as "How to encourage indigenous industries", "Obstacles in the way of India's national struggle" and various other constitutional and educational problems.

Premchand was a born writer. At the age of thirteen he dramatised the unsuccessful "affair" of a distant uncle of his, one of those "bachelors till late age" who are always landed in trouble. At eighteen, he wrote a serial novel bearing the significant name of *Honhar Birwan Ke Chikne Chikne Pat*, which was published in *Āwāz-i-Khalq* of Benares. In 1901, he wrote another novel which, however, was never published. Shortly after, he jumped into the literary field in right earnest.

Part of his zeal for writing must be traced to his early wide readings. While still a student in the 7th. class at Gorakhpur, we find him reading, rather surreptitiously, behind huge black

mounds of tobacco, and enveloping himself in clouds of tobacco smoke in a tobacco merchant's shop, the encyclopoedic and interminable *Tilism-I-Hosh-E-Ruba* and translations of Reynold's novels and, when nothing could be had, translations of the *Purānas*. During his leaner days at Benares, he read *Chandra-Kāntā Santati* and *Fisānā-I-Āẓād*, by themselves landmarks in Hindustani literature. Ever after, all his life, Premchand remained a voracious reader. He read indiscriminately, whatever fell into his hands, all sorts of books, books on history, philosophy, science, fiction, travel, books by Hugo, Anatole France, Dickens, Scott, Galsworthy, Hardy, Eliot, G. B. Shaw, Tagore, Romain Rolland and Tolstoy, to name only the important ones. Some years before his death, his friends say, he read extensively on the Great Experiment in Russia. He also translated such works as *Back to Methuselah*, *Silas Marner*, *Thais*, *Justice*, *Silver Box* and stories by Tolstoy.

Some of these books, like the "*Fisānā-I-Āẓād*," endowed him with flow and spontaneity of language; others, like Reynold's novels and "*Tilism-I-Hosh-E-Ruba*," gave him a fertile imagination; still others widened his intellectual horizon.

Besides his articles in the *Zamānā*, which have been referred to above, he wrote the monthly column "*Raftār-e-Zamānā*" therein. Inspired by the example of great men, he wrote short biographical sketches of Indian and foreign great men. Some of these sketches have lately appeared under the significant name of *Qalam*, *Talwār* and *Tyāg* or *Ba Kamalon Ke Darshan*.

About this time, he was attracted to Tagore's stories, a form of literature not yet much attempted in India, particularly in Hindustani. He saw how, with a little imagination, this craft could be exploited with great advantage. A great vista lay before him. He studied Tolstoy, Tchekhov and later Guy de Maupassant, Pierre Loti, and others. He modelled his stories on the technique and styles of these great masters. In due course of time, he evolved his own technique. His stories include

those of all types and all schools. That his achievements were overwhelming can be seen by even a superficial comparison between one of his later stories, say *Kafan*, to his first story, *Duniyā Ka Sab Se Anmol Ratan*, which made its appearance in 1907, and was over-ridden with Persian words and similes, scenes transplanted from the Caucasus on to the Indian soil. Herein, like Sarshar, he plays with words ; his characters lack depth.

But in those far off days, even this was considered to be a great and bold experiment. Enthusiasts saw that a new sun was rising. He was warmly hailed and soon, "Nawab Rai", the sobriquet under which he now wrote, became a house-hold word.

The unique thing about these stories was their theme. In those days of 1908, when the very utterance of the word *Swaraj* was enough to find one behind the bars, these stories smacked of battle and breathed a passion for independence. Naturally, therefore, when a collection of five such stories was published under the significant name of *Saur-e-watan* by the *Zāmanā* press, efforts were made to find out the identity of the author. And naturally, again, when it was found that the real author of these stories was a teacher in Government employment, the British Collector of Hamirpur was wild with rage. Hundreds of copies of the book were burned publicly by him, and it was with great difficulty that Premchand extricated himself. "Nawab Rai" was instructed not to write *anything* on *any* subject, before getting the sanction of the Education Department. "Nawab Rai" preferred a "death" and soon Dhanpat Rai Srivastava became "Premchand". This was in 1912.

Now he took to writing historical fiction, depicting, through his stories, the bravery and chivalry of the Rajputs in Bundhelkhund, where he at this time worked. This was followed up by stories about the Mughal times and from Islamic history. Such stories appeared in *Sapta Saroj*, *Agni Samādhi* and *Premā Pūrnimā*, till he switched over to political stories, at the end of the Great War.

In 1914 appeared his *Sevāsadan* or *Bazār-I-Husn*, the book with which Premchand's literary apprenticeship came to an end. This book, which was the first "modern" novel in Hindustani and dealt with men and women of flesh and blood, took the country by storm.

Previous to this, Premchand had written novels like *Premā* or *Pratigyā*, or *Ham Khurma O-Ham Sawab*, or still later, *Bewab* ; *Kishna*, which was later enlarged into that stout volume of fiction, namely, *Ghaban* ; *Jalwa-I-Isar* and *Vardān*. Another novel *Nirmalā*, which, from the point of view of unity of plot and construction, stands apart from all other novels of Premchand, has a theme which falls into this period. The language of all these novels, with the exception of *Nirmalā* and *Ghaban*, is very much Persianised or Sanskritised. There is little spontaneity, and the characters lack depth. All these defects disappear in his next novel, namely *Sevāsadan*, which, besides being an extremely realistic characterisation, has lyric qualities, which have not been surpassed save perhaps in *Godān*.

Although all that he wrote after 1920 can be traced in a nascent form in these novels, there are a few traits which Premchand outgrew in the next phase. The common thread that runs through all his works of the first phase, before the appearance of *Premāśram* or *Gosha-I-Aflat*, betrays Premchand's keen social consciousness. These are "social" novels, and deal primarily with the life of the bourgeoisie middle class residing in towns and constituted by the Babu class, clerks, Government servants, pleaders, police officials, teachers, etc.

This class leads a thoroughly artificial life, maintaining costly establishments which are outside its means and which force it to augment its income by illegal gratification, leading sometimes to fatal consequences, such as the ruin of Kishen Chand's family and the entry of Suman into the prostitutes' quarters, or landing into hopeless situations, as it leads Ramanath in *Ghaban*.

Genteel poverty and frustrations in life had sharpened Premchand's sense of justice. He thoroughly reflected over the



system of social organisation. He believed that the sheet-anchor of a stable and just social order was a happy domestic life, and the bed-rock of a happy domestic life was the position of woman in family life. This attitude, not materially different from the ancient Indian ideal, remained consistent from his first book *Premā* to his last *Godān*. Himself a chaste soul, he hated the very idea of lust. He thought of woman, but never of sex. One of his characters, Suman, a prostitute, remains only a dancing girl and does not sell away her body. She even cooks her own meals !

Premchand takes us through the Dal Mandi of Benares, but we emerge healthier. By contrast with nobler things he always eclipses the darker aspects of the human character. One fails to find a really dark or successful villainous character in Premchand's works. He believed that human nature was fundamentally noble. Most of his woman characters are essentially noble beings. Munni, that wonderful psychological study in *Maidan-E-Amal* or *Karmabhūmi*, is a clue to Premchand's ideal of chastity. His ideal woman must have the virtues of self-sacrifice, self-denial and self-control, a capacity to suffer and to rise to super-human heights. Because of her privileged position as a mother, he always placed woman far above man. The Western ideas of equality, vote and courtship, in his opinion, were nothing but attempts to side-track woman.

Nevertheless, he shed tears of blood at the miserable lot of the Indian woman, and the injustice being done to her, as a result of which there is not a single happy couple in Premchand's works. He cried with Maselfield :

*Men triumph over women still,  
Men trample women's rights at will,  
And Man's lust roams the world untamed.*

Premchand cried hoarse against the marriage of young and innocent girls to aged wealthy men, and advocated that widowers should marry none but widows.

The present unjust system, he reflected, could lead women, the victims of this order, only to red light streets, as he has

actually shown in several of his novels. The only solution was the doing away with exploitation which made possible the existence of a very rich and a very poor class. He advocated a thorough shake-up, a vital over-hauling of the social and economic organisation.

We are on the threshold of the second phase of Premchand's career. For never again was Premchand to go back to the towns and cities for any length of time. Real India lives in the villages, in Lakhanpur and Pandepur, and, from now on his novels are centred round the village. The heroes and heroines are the rustic sons and daughters of Nature, or those who helped them. By themselves, these novels constitute the history of the modern Indian village.

The great agency that brought about this change was Gandhiji, who visited, in February 1921, Gorakhpur, in connection with his satyagraha campaign and addressed a meeting of three lakhs of people, an unheard-of thing in the history of Gorakhpur. There was already a halo round his name. His fame had travelled faster. It had a hypnotic influence on the people. Premchand says : "When I saw him, I felt myself as if a dead man had come to life again." Before the third day was out Premchand had submitted his resignation, not many years before retirement with pension ! What his feelings must have been can be guessed from his story *Jail* or *Abuti*, wherein the hero says : "Some unknown force is dragging me along. I don't want to go, and yet I go, like the man who does not want to die but dies... . When all these people whom we honour are putting everything to stake, there is no way out for me. I can cheat myself no longer ... My honour, too, is at stake. And honour knows no compromise." Shortly after he resigned he started a *charkha* shop, which proved a failure and Premchand was forced to seek service elsewhere. His ambition in life was the headmastership of a non-Governmental school and the editorship of a paper which would espouse the cause of the peasants. In pursuance of these aims, he served in the Marwari High School at

Cawnpore. Differences of principle, however, arose and Premchand resigned, to become the editor of the *Mayada*, which place he changed for the Principalship of the Kashi Vidyapith, whence he resigned, because he felt that his pay of Rs. 125/- a month was proving a heavy burden on the institution.

Sometime before this, he committed the greatest blunder of his life, for which he and India paid dearly. Investing all his savings, as also the money of his friends, he bought and established the Saraswati Press—the name “Goddess of Knowledge” is significant. He had thought that the press would solve his financial worries, and free him to devote his energies to literary pursuits. But contrary proved to be the case. It turned out to be a great liability. There was no job work for the press and, to defray the incurring expenses, he had to sell his works in the open market, to serve as the editor of the *Mādhurī* and in the Naval Kishore Press, writing at times primers for children.

To provide work for the press, as also to found a monthly which could bring about the synthesis of Urdu and Hindi and be a medium for the exchange of the best and representative literary works of all Indian languages, he founded the *Hans* in 1930. In passing, we might mention that Premchand was among those very few who did not lose his perspective in the Urdu-Hindi-Hindustani controversy. Really speaking, he had brought the two very near and served to exchange thousands of words between Hindi and Urdu.

Least biased of men, a Hindu by birth, a Muslim by education, Premchand was nothing but a human being by creed. Throughout his life, he worked to bring the conflicting elements in India's national life together.

In 1933 he brought out another weekly, the *Jāgaran*, for he thought that this would serve the cause and also provide work for the press. Of these two papers, the *Hans* and the *Jāgaran*, it must be said that they were landmarks in Hindi journalism. While their literary standard was very high, they were

priced very moderately, so as to be within the reach of the poor.

Premchand's business acumen was almost nil. By 1934 his losses had mounted to the huge figure of Rs. 15,000. To meet this difficulty he had to go to Bombay to serve the film producers, for whom he wrote scenarios. Getting disgusted with the aims and the means that the film producers employed—he refused to compromise on the point of principle—Premchand left them disappointed, and came back to Benares, shattered in health, to die a short time later, in 1936, the year of publication of his last novel *Godān*.

Premchand was a very conscientious worker. Punctual like the clock, he worked unceasingly. His life could vie with an ascetic's. Up to the age of fifty he could not afford to go to Bombay or Delhi, or indeed out of the United Provinces. The only three luxuries that he enjoyed were the *huggā*, a carefree and child-like laughter and poverty. He wanted to live like the masses, with whom he sympathised.

With the passage of years, particularly after Gandhiji appeared in the political arena, Premchand's consciousness about the economic exploitation of the peasant by various agencies backed by the ruling class became keener and keener. Soft till now, his notes soon became louder and louder, even disturbing and challenging. If social consciousness was the keynote of the first phase, economic and political thoughts were that of the second. His passion for India's political liberation gathered strength day by day. Several of his stories were banned. There is many a story like *Jail* or *Abuti*, *Lāl Feeta*, *Riyasat Ka Diwan*, *Holi Ka Uphar*, *Dāmūl Ka Qaidi* etc. wherein the satyagraha movement is portrayed in a very realistic and graphic manner. *Holī Kī Chhutti* is a sermon on pacifism by an ex-soldier. The mental conflict that harassed the intelligentsia in the past twenty-five years about the relative advantage of the use of violence and non-violence is reflected in *Qātil*. How young men were drawn into the orbit of revolutionary activities is demonstrated in *Bhne Ko Tattā*.

The second note, which is more important, is the disturbing lot of poverty of the peasants and the pitiable plight of the Harijans. They provide themes for some of the most touching stories by Premchand, as for instance *Pūs Kī Rāt*, *Kafan*, *Najat* or *Sadgati* and *Mandir*.

All the novels by Premchand, which appeared between the years 1921 and 1934, as also his last novel, are agrarian epics. Be it *Premāśram* or *Gosha-I-Afiat*, *Rangabhūmi* or *Changan-E-Hasti*, *Kāyākalpa* or *Parda-I-Majaṛ*, *Karmabhūmi* or *Maldan-E-Amal*, *Godān*, Premchand's sympathy for the peasant and the underdog, which, between them, constitute the great ocean of humanity, is reflected unmistakably.

The common trait of all these novels — a trait at once bold and unprecedented in Hindustani literature, and a trait exclusively Premchand's own—is that the background of all these novels is the Indian soil, the mother earth of the peasant.

Premchand is not only the master interpreter, but also the mouthpiece of the village population, whose life and aspirations he reveals in a panoramic form, with great psychological insight, an intensely realistic, pictorial skill and great narrative ability—but when he takes up the higher, or middle classes, as material for picture, he miserably fails. Besides passages of caustic wit, there are passages after passages of great emotional vigour and poetic beauty, cleverly interwoven with the rural customs and legends, and interjected with the astonishingly rich and colourful proverbs, idioms and metaphors, drawn mostly from rural life, a life with which Premchand was associated at an early age.

His style is very simple with musical touch about it. At times he is a dialect writer, the dialogue adding to the realism of narration and characterisation.

The passion for Nature also is an important thread. Unlike Hardy's or Meredith's, Nature in Premchand's works does not impede, or accelerate, the development of the characters ; it is

always a sympathetic observer. It changes with the changing moods of the peasants.

Premchand was attracted to the Congress only for one reason, and that was because the Congress was the only organisation which supported the cause of the peasants and the down-trodden, besides, being a valiant fighter in the cause of India's freedom, its leader, Gandhiji, being the only one who had, and has, his hand on the pulse of the masses. It was Premchand's sincerest desire that the virtual cell of imprisonment in which the peasant lived must be broken. And success or failure in the achievement of that aim was the yard-stick of progress. He rejected the 1919 Reforms, not because this or that party rejected it, but because it did not materially affect the peasant. The cry of democracy, or dictatorship, of votes etc. were in the opinion of Premchand, all vain ; they signified nothing. And so far as the capturing of power by Indians was concerned, Premchand made no secret that he would rather go without it than have merely a change from the "white" to the "black" master. Indeed, he recognised that the pseudo-Nationalist landlords, as the Rai Sahib in *Godān*, or industrialists like John Sewak in *Raṅgabhūmi*, who always keep their legs in both the camps, camouflage their real intention and take no time to change with the winds, like the weathercocks, constituted a real menace to the existence of the peasant.

Before he wrote *Godān* Premchand read extensively on the agricultural experiments in Russia, and it seems that he was enamoured of the collectivisation farming system. But he would not advocate, and was rather averse to, achieving that end by a violent upheaval to overthrow the present unjust system. He preferred the method of gradual evolution. The Gandhian stamp on Premchand's mind was imprinted too deeply. It is the most marked characteristic of this phase.

Another characteristic about these works lies in the fact that they constitute a picture gallery. Their themes advance with the movement of times, whose footsteps can be distinctly heard.

*Premāśram* ( 1922 ) portrays the Indian peasants' struggle against the Westernised and brutish Taluqdar, who is much more crooked and ingenious than his noble-hearted predecessor. The forerunner of the agrarian novels, it presents to us graphically the 1921 No-rent Campaign in the United Provinces.

In 1926 labour strikes loomed large in India and all over the world. Industrialisation threatened the existence of the peasant in a predominantly agricultural country like India. A disciple of Tolstoy and Gandhi, Premchand could not look upon this menace with composure, and it is reflected in that 1,000-page book, *Raṅgabhūmi* ( 1926 ). Its field is wider. For the problems touched upon are many and varied. The Indian society envelops, not only Hindus and Muslims, but also Christians. And this fact was recognised by Hindustani literature for the first time. Congressite reformers make inroads on the Indian States as well. The next novel, *Kāyakaḷpa*, brings back to us the Hindu-Muslim riots and the general political inactivity. As a throw-back, Premchand at this time reflected on the metaphysical theories he had come into contact with in the translations of the *Puranas* that he read at a very early age. In *Karmabhūmi*, Premchand again picks up the thread of satyagraha movements, so far neglected, save for the few contemporary touches about political dacoities in *Ghaban* ( 1930 ). Herein the struggle waged is triangular, for the vindication of the rights of Harijans, of the labourer class and the peasants. Jails, repression and imprisonment crowd the pages of these novels. They constitute the history of the times through which Premchand lived. He is a chronicler, standing to Gandhiji in the same relation as was Maxim Gorki to Lenin.

As a matter of fact, even the heroes and the heroines of Premchand's works are eminent personalities in India's social and political life, of course, clothed in fictitious garb. The author once himself admitted that, while chiselling the character of Sophia for *Raṅgabhūmi*, he had before his mind's eye the illustrious Annie Besant, to whom India owes not a little. Several of the important traits in Premshankar and Surdas may well be

found in Tolstoy and Gandhiji. Many have seen in Amarkant the prototype of Jawaharlal Nehru.

The heroes, be it Premshankar, Surdas, Chakradhar or Amarkant, are all pacifists, believing in Gandhian non-violence, inspired by selfless love and passion for justice, warriors against tyranny, seekers after Truth, always struggling and suffering to arrive at a new integration of moral and spiritual values. As opposed to characters in the first phase, here they fight neither for themselves, nor for particular individuals, but to impart strength, to give self-confidence to the down-trodden, tongue-tied masses. They always love to give battle, if the cause is just, no matter what the sacrifice they are called upon to make.

His characters gradually come by strength and confidence in themselves. Suman cannot proceed without the support of Vithaldas. Sadan Singh loves her, but has not the courage to admit it. Shraddā, in *Premāśram*, is a coward in the beginning. She knows that her husband is in the right. But she is afraid of the all-powerful rod of the society. Fear and conservatism, and not justice and love, triumph. In the end, however, she realises the truth and boldly defies the society. Vinaya, in *Raṅgabhūmi*, is very self-assertive, as also is Sophia. They leave their homes. For Sophia love is the deciding factor ; it is the only law she knows. And love knows no barriers, least of all, of religion. She makes no secret of her love, and is prepared to go to all lengths. Shraddhā is so independent-minded and assertive that Amarkant, her husband, is driven out of the house. Himself he is a very bold and independent soul. Duty is his only law. He goes to villages and organises people for a mass struggle, in which he ultimately succeeds. If one were to find a character as sublime as Mālati, in *Godān*, it would be a vain search. It is as noble as that of Grazia, in Romain Rolland's *Jean-Christophe*.

Premchand's characters are not individuals, but representatives of the classes they spring from. If you know one character well, through him you also know the life, the aspirations, the virtues and failings of that entire class.



Usually, in Premchand's novels there are characters which represent several strata of the society. In *Premasram*, *Raṅgabdhūmi*, *Kayākalpa* and *Karmabdhūmi*, there are two or more themes running parallel to each other, and touching only at a few points and that too at the surface. The plots of the novels are very loosely constructed. Sometimes, they look more like the collection of two or more novels, carelessly pieced together. There is very little of continuity between two successive chapters. The technique is more like the nineteenth century Continental novels. This defect, however, is not exclusively Premchand's. Take, for instance, the novels of Aldous Huxley, say *After Many a Summer*. The chapters are very loosely pieced together. And if the chapter wherein Mr. Propter enunciates his theories about the Good and Evil and about the possible results of prolongation of life is taken out the main theme is not at all affected, as is also true of that chapter in *Godān*, wherein Prof. Mehta discourses on women's demand for votes and equality, etc. The element of suspense and drama is usually absent from Premchand's novels; the denouement is betrayed very early in the works. Besides, there are too many divagations, improbable happenings and coincidences. Also in the pre-1920 novels of Premchand, too many of the characters die unnatural or violent deaths, sometimes by drowning, and at others by epidemic, suicide, etc. Often these are the results of the inherent qualities in the characters themselves. Their author was a master-hand at the exposition of these characters, but he always landed them in hopeless situations, wherefrom there was no way out, except by violent death. Perhaps Premchand's idealism had some part to play in this phenomenon.

That Premchand was an idealist needs no repetition. He was a writer with a purpose, inspired by lofty aims for literature. His outlook was subjective. He wanted literature to be the criticism of life, and not merely for entertainment, or written on the ideal of "art for art's sake". He gave expression to his views on the place and function of literature in life, its ends and means,

in his presidential address delivered at the First Progressive Writers' Conference, held at Lucknow in April, 1936. That address still remains the only paper in Hindustani on this vital subject ; it is a manifesto for the Hindustani and other writers. Therein, Premchand advocated not for Idealist or Realist schools of literature. He showed how a careful blend or fusion of the two was necessary. Both had an important part to play in life ; while the one exposed the angularities, the other showed the way to improvement.

We have already seen how in the novels of the second phase the heroes launch satyagraha movements on a mass scale. These movements always succeed ; it is the masses, through their leaders, who triumph. This is idealism taken too far, because in actual life a compromise is not a very common thing.

However, we find that in *Karmabhūmi* the gravitation is more and more towards realism. In *Godān*, idealism has almost fully given place to realism. It is a powerful criticism of life. No grimmer picture of the stark realities, and no more ruthless observation of the agonies undergone by the Indian peasant who is not only at the mercy of inclement forces of Nature, but is also being sucked by many agencies, the aristocracy, the bureaucracy and the theocracy having their share, and backed by the armed might of a mighty Empire, exists in Indian literature. If indulgence may be permitted, the book, in spite of its few faults surpasses Pearl Buck's *Good Earth*, in its realistic presentation of the peasant's life. Premchand's art is at its highest water-mark here. There are few coincidences or improbable happenings, no unnatural deaths, few mass movements ending in compromise. The 'lyric qualities of this book are overwhelming ; the language is extremely simple, even poetic. Premchand is no longer an optimist. Here-in he is a great pessimist.

*Godān* is the biography of Hori, the tragedy of whose life deepens at every successive stage till Hori is defeated in the battle of life and succumbs to the blows of Fate, in his endeavour to keep his head above the water, out of the clutches of the

moneylender. The novel ends a bit abruptly. Perhaps, Premchand was too moved to complete the novel. Be that as it may, the powerful climax of the epical story grips the attention of the reader.

Hori's life is symbolic of Premchand's own struggles, his own disappointments and frustrations. Like Hori's *Godān*, it proved to be the *Godān* of Premchand as well as was *Kafan*, the last collection of his short stories.

Nevertheless, Premchand's achievements were not a few. If he had created nothing but Hori's character, his place in the history of Indian literature, as also in that of world literature, would have been assured. What, however, gives him a unique place in Hindustani literature is the fact, that it was he who grasped the hand of literature, while it was still wallowing in medievalism, and by his single-handed efforts brought her to the threshold of a new and brilliant world, the world of Mikhel Sholokhov and Rayment. It was a great feat which would normally have taken many generations and many a masterly hand and mind. His life's harvest, surely then, was a rich one, sufficient to place him among the gallery of the best writers of the world.

# THE FOLK-LITERATURE OF GUJERAT. \*

By J. K. MEGHANI

I cannot begin this discourse better than by quoting a comrade from across the seas : "What poetry owes to the bread of sorrow has never been better told than by the Greek folksinger who condenses it into one brief sentence : Songs are the words spoken by those who suffer."<sup>1</sup>

The woman of Gujerat suffered, and she sang out her sorrow almost every night through her circular Garba dance-songs. She sang to sweeten her woe and to embellish her labour. Her poetry saved her from embitterment and from cynicism. She flavoured her grief with the spices of mirth. The tragic in her life was redeemed by the poetic justice in her folksongs. Here is a sample :—

## SONG.

Never wed your girl to the Vadhiar<sup>2</sup> land O father.  
Of Vadhiar land the mother-in-law is a tyrant.  
She sets me to grind by scorching daytime, and she puts me  
to the spinning-wheel at night. Alas ! I cannot see  
the thread.

At early dawn she sends me off to the well for water.

While going a-bed at night, she puts the jar-cushion at my  
pillow, the rope at the foot of my bed and the pair  
of pitchers in my own bed room, lest I find excuses.

My rope is short, and cannot reach the water. From dawn  
to dusk I draw and draw in vain.

O birdie ! flying birdie ! go tell my father this last fare-  
well ; tell him his darling daughter drowned herself.

\* Continued from Part I. Vol. IX, *V. B. Quarterly*, May-July, 1948

1 'Study of Folksongs' by The Countess Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco.

2 A district of Gujerat.

Tell it to father, but tell it not to mother, for my tender-hearted mother will weep her eyes out.

“Nor drown yourself nor take the deadly drug my child. I’ll send for you on the eighth day of the bright fortnight.”

On the eight day of the bright fortnight I awaited at the well ; and lo and behold ! there come my *Kaka*,<sup>1</sup> *Mama*.<sup>2</sup> and my brother ; each one with a pair of choicest oxen.

“Stand aloof you silly one !” They said ; “and let us see to this hated pair of pitchers.”

Then my *Kaka* drew from the well, and *Mama* placed the pitchers on my head, we marched through the village to my husband’s home, and my brother dashed the pitchers at my *Sasu*’s<sup>3</sup> door.

Three choicest pairs of oxen carried me merrily back.

The folksong is seldom a propagandist one, and it hardly ever takes sides. A home-coming like the above is not always that of a persecuted girl ; and a married daughter is more often an unwelcome guest not only to the human members of the parental home, but to the animals and the birds under the father’s roof. Thrashed by the husband’s brother, the lady comes back to her father’s home uninvited. The reception is a mixed one :

#### SONG.

From the village-square her father spoke : “Here comes my baby-daughter of old who frolicked on my lap.”

Seated on the stool her mother spoke : “There comes my naughty child.”

1 Paternal uncle.

2 Maternal uncle.

3 Mother-in-law.

The brother's wife with her boy at her breast chafed :  
 "There comes the wretch to pick quarrels with me."

Riding his horse the brother said : "There comes the  
 claimant for garments new."

At the doorstep the dog barked out : "She will cudgel me  
 now as of old."

The cat too purred and said : "Alas, now she will lick  
 away the frying-pan of butter."

The mouse peeped out of the wall-hole and said "The  
 wretch will plaster all my holes."

The dove was wrath at the top of the roof and said "The  
 wretch will all day scare me away with her constant  
 ho ! ho ! shouts."<sup>1</sup>

Very wide and full of variety is this realm of female garba-poetry. Hardly a phase of folk-life was left untouched and unadorned in these songs. Social sorrow and domestic mirth did not dominate the entire aesthetic life. The voice of valour ever arose out of the depth of a society that had no Penal Code, but a code of honour, no police, no magistracy, but a natural respect for chivalry. In vigorous tunes and virile words women sang the simple tales of men :

#### SONG.

On the balcony of a village-fortress Sonal was playing,  
 Sonal the Rajput maid.

From there they kidnapped the charming Sonal.

"Never mind" said Sonal, "for yonder lies my father's town,  
 and father will surely ransom me."

The father came out with a white herd<sup>2</sup> as ransom for  
 fair Sonal.

1 The cooing of the dove on the house-top is considered ominous in folk-life of Gujerat.

2 A herd of choicest cows.

The Kidnappers scorned the white white herd, and onward  
marched with Sonal.

Never mind, for yonder lies my *Mama's* land, and *Mama*  
sure will ransom me.

Her *Mama* came out with his soot-black herd<sup>1</sup> and prayed  
for Sonal's release.

The robbers onward marched in scorn.

Never mind, for yonder lies my brother's land and he will  
surely ransom me.

Brother did offer his stud of choicest white ponies.

But Sonal was not freed.

Lastly they passed by her husband's land, and Sonal felt  
quite sure.

The husband came out with none of these gifts, he came  
with his sword, not caring for his head.

Instantly Sonal was rescued—Sonal, the lovely Rajput bride.

Distinctly typical among these, are the songs of sailors' wives. Their favourite themes are the farewell to the mates and sons, who are sailing away ; the wine that drowns their pangs of parting, the shipwreck, the watery grave, the endless waiting and pining at home and so on. Several of them strike a more poignant note. Of peculiar interest among them are those songs that relate to the seduction of sailors' lonely wives by the white settlers of early days along the coast of Kathiawar. One sweet song is included in the 20-25 sailor-songs collected by me in the year 1932 from the women of Katpar, a fishermen's village in the Gulf of Cambay near the town of Bhavnagar :

#### SONG.

“For want of bread you sailed for Malbar oh my mate ! and  
I am left to the mercy of my cousins. They harass  
and oppress me.”

1 A herd of choicest buffaloes.

She went to fetch water at the village-gate of Pithalpur, and the Topiwala<sup>1</sup> went after her ; Jangla prowled after her.

While she drew from the well, the gale blew away her scarf. Her limbs were laid bare before the Topiwala's lustful eyes.

"O Topiwala and O Jangla ! Let me first take my nuptial rounds around the sacred fire, let me first cast oblations unto the holy wedding-altar. Then I shall be wedded to you for ever. Let me go at present.

Alas ! alas ! the gale blew away her scarf, and she lay in the Topiwala's bed.

From the women's garba-songs, let us now turn to street-singer's ballad-lore. The street-singing mendicants fall into two classes : The Bharathari-Nath, or more popularly known as the Nath Bawa sect, and the ordinary Veragi group. The Nath Bawa sings to the accompaniment of his Ravanhatho<sup>2</sup> and the Veragi's instrument is simple Ektara. Ravanhatho has a strangely mythological origin. Ravan the mighty demon-hero of the Ramayana, sat chanting his prayer and praise to the God Siva, in order to secure the boon of invincible prowess. One day when Ravan was almost on the point of propitiating the Deity, singing his hymns at the greatest epic heights, the string of his instrument snapped. It was a great calamity. The chanting of the hymn should not cease. If it ceased a hundred years of his prayer would go to naught. Not a moment was to be lost. No time was there to go and fetch a new string. The demon therefore instantly tore one of his arms, took out the living artery of his bleeding limb, and with that the instrument was re-stringed, the chanting of the hymn was soon resumed, and no wonder, the generous Deity pronounced his wished-for boon.

1 Topiwala and Jangla are the two nicknames for the westerner. Here they stand for the Firangi.

2 The hand of Ravana.



The Ravanhatho on which the Nath Bawa plays takes its name from the above episode. Though of a crude construction, it is wonderfully melodious. No bigger than a man's arm ; a half cocoanut-shell at its one end, a slim bamboo-piece fixed to it, and a couple of strings on the bamboo, and on them runs the bow. The bow is furnished with a bunch of tiny jingling brass-bells. The wielder of Ravanhatho goes from door to door and commands rapt attention of women and children. He goes to the hotel door and people flock around him. Remarkable is this personality. He claims to belong to the hoary Yogi cult of Bhartruhari and Gopichand. The ballads of these two royal saints are the Nath Bawa's monopoly. He sings them with a special, almost inimitable gusto of his own. Of Bhartruhari and Gopichand he knows not a bit more than these few ballads, and of the hoary sect from whom he derives his descent, he retains hardly any sign save a bunch of rosaries and a scarlet-hued turban. In spite of his being a mendicant he is a house-holder.

Does he sing of the two saints alone ? No, he is versatile. He picks up anything that is popular, from the lofty to the vulgar. ( At present he has taken to the craze of the cinema-songs ! ) But he was previously renowned for the outlaw-ballads. The province of Kathiawar, was notorious for its border-warfare, its freebooters, its political outlaws, its virile and death-challenging opponents of the new order sought to be established by the Native States with the assistance of the armies of the East India Company. The fearless Nath Bawa roamed over hills and dales chanting the glories of these dare-devil outlaws to the accompaniment of the Ravanhatho.

Remarkable among these outlaw-songs is a group devoted to the Wagher clan of Dwarika. Once the feudal rulers of the whole coastal tract called Okha Mandal of which Dwarika is the capital, these Waghers collected pilgrim-tax, and they claimed supremacy on the sea. Their turbulence and piracy was suppressed by the new power of the Gackwar assisted by the company

Sarkar. This subjugation grew irksome to the Waghers. They were oppressed. They rose in open revolt, which was crushed, but the entire clan of Waghers, women, babes and cattle, with bag and baggage went into outlawry. In due course the superior forces of the Gaekwar reduced the Waghers to utter desolation, and chance was offered them by Major Barton, the political Chief Officer of the Sarkar, to surrender on alluring terms. This offer, though approved by the elders, was spurned by the young blood who carried on till honourable end on the field of battle. The above episode is put into the following ballad by a Nath Bawa called Nathu-Nath :

## SONG

Surrender not — surrender not your swords O Valiant  
Malubha.<sup>1</sup>

Death cometh once to all.

Surrender not your arms O Comrades mine ;  
I, Devobha,<sup>2</sup> say, surrender not your swords.

If swords and arms be not wielded into a fight like this,  
why wear them as false show !

Surrender not your swords O Comrades mine, we are to  
die but once.

Their first encounter was a Pipardi,<sup>3</sup> where not a soul was  
scratched.

O boys, surrender not your arms.        -

Their last encounter was at Machbarda hills. The Waghers  
sat there entrenched.

The sahibs Hebat and Latur — they dashing rode, they  
sprang down from their horses, and they launched  
their forces on the Wagher foes.

1 The leader of the young Wagher party.

2 Another young Wagher leader.

3 A village.

Surrender not your swords.

A challenge rang from behind the trench : “O Hebat Sahib and O Latur Sahib, behold how manhood strikes.”

Forthwith the Wagher lifts his double-barrelled gun to his chest, and misses not his deadly aim.

The Sahibs found their grave on Machharda Hill. The Waghers also fell to the Sahibs — shot.

Bear witness oh my soul, these are the words of poor Nathu-nath : Your names shall ring for ages.

Surrender not your swords.

With one hand twisting his moustache and another on the hilt of his sword, how can Malubha salam to the English ! For the third hand he has none.

“The reports of your wrath for the Sahibs reached the Karachi town ; the hushed up madams asked each other, “Really friend, ‘it’s true ?”

God Ranchhod<sup>1</sup> wept in his sacred shrine, and the Holy Gomti drew her mourning-veil, when the red red ruby, Mulu Manek<sup>2</sup> rolled in the Barda<sup>3</sup> mountain-dust.

1 The presiding deity of Dwarika. Gomati is the sacred stream.

2 Manek was the clan-name of the Wagher hero Mulu : originally Manek means the ruby jem.

3 The name of the hill where the Wagher hero fell

## LOCHANA PANDITA'S RAGATARANGINI AND ITS HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE.

*By* KSHITIMOHAN SEN

THE culture and civilization of a particular nation depend ultimately on its intellectual wealth. While the life and history of a nation are the outward expressions of that wealth, its literature and music constitute an inner and fuller expression of the same.

In our Vedic literature we find numerous references to vocal and instrumental music and the art of dancing as well. Religious observances like the Yajnas in ancient India were usually accompanied by musical performances including dancing which were generally held around the sacrificial altar. Although we do not know all about the music of those times still we can form some idea of that music from the hymns of the Sāma Vedas.

Vedāngas afford us further evidences of the development of music. From the Purāṇas we learn how Vedic music subsequently came into clash with Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava music. In the Purāṇas we find a systematic treatment on the science of music. The study of the Rāgas and Rāgiṇīs had advanced considerably even in those early times. In Vedāṅga as well as in the Purāṇas we find mention of the sage Nārada.

Neither Jainism nor Buddhism assigned a place of importance to music in the initial stages. But subsequently for the propagation of their faiths they had to take recourse to the help of music. The development of musical literature is largely indebted to the Bhāgavatas. Modern Indian music owes its richness more to the Bhāgavata rather than to the Vedic music. There are numerous references to Bhāgavata music in the Purāṇas.

Barring Nārada, we find special mention of three sages who made valuable contributions to our musical literature in the Post-Purāṇic days. They are still regarded as authorities in the field of music. They are Dattila, Bharata and Mataṅga. It was

during this period that two distinct schools of music rose up namely the classical and the popular. It is interesting to note that what passes for popular music in one age develops into the classical in the next. It then assumes an air of aristocracy and blocks the way for the popular music which has cropped up in the meantime. It is not my purpose here to discuss the music of those ages.

Next came the age of Śārṅgadeva, the author of *Saṅgīta-ratnākara* and other musical authorities. Although Śārṅgadeva belonged to Kashmere he was a protégé of Siṅghaṇa, king of Devagiri in South India. Siṅghaṇa reigned from 1210 to 1247. It is evident, therefore, that *Saṅgīta-ratnākara* must have been written round about this time.

A stone inscription of the 7th century which has been discovered in South India gives us a peep into the musical lore of that age. The inscription has been discovered at a place called Kundumia Mālaya within the state of Puddukotāh in Madras Presidency. Centuries intervene between this inscription of the 7th century and *Saṅgīta-ratnākara* of the 13th century. Many things happened in India in between these two centuries. One would naturally ask if there were no other musical authorities born during this intervening period or since the *Purāṇas* were written.

Jayadeva, the famous author of *Gīta Govinda* flourished during the time of King Lakshmaṇa Sena of Bengal. Lakshmaṇa Sena ascended the throne of Bengal in the year 1178. ( Pandit Chintāharan Chakravarty, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. III pp. 186 ) *Gīta Govinda* still stands as the best collection of songs in Sanskrit literature. *Gīta Govinda* affords us a comprehensive study in the *Rāgas* and *Rāgiṇis* and times ( ভাগ ). It appears, therefore, that music had reached a high stage of development in Bengal at that time. *Gīta Govinda* was written before Śārṅgadeva's book. It would not be unnatural to suppose, therefore, that prominent musical authorities must have flourished in Bengal during the period of *Gīta Govinda*. I was for a long time

searching for these missing musical masters. I was not far wrong in my supposition. We have recently come upon that authority in music. His name is Lochana Pandita and his work is named *Rāga-Taraṅginī*. This book was brought out in print in Poona in the year 1918. It was published by Pandit Dattātreyā Keshab Joshi. There is no mention of this book in the list given by S. J. Mangleśa Telanga of extant Sanskrit works on Indian music either in printed or manuscript form in the appendix of his book *Saṅgīta Makaranda* published in 1920, although the book in question was published two years earlier by a Pandit belonging to their own group. The real reason was that the book failed to attract sufficient attention. The original manuscript of this book was found in Allahabad. Pandit Srikrishna Joshi made out a copy and sent it to Poona for publication.

They, however, failed to find out which province Lochana Pandita belonged to and also the period in which he lived and wrote. This book gives Vidyāpati's songs as specimens of popular song. Vidyāpati was the court poet of Śiva Sinhha (1399), King of Mithila. Besides that, in *Rāga Taraṅginī* we find mention of the Ragas like *Iman* ( pp. 5, 7, 10 ), *Firodasta* ( p. 9 ) etc. These Ragas came to be known for the first time during the time of Amir Khusru. Khusru was a courtier of Sultan Alauddin ( 1295-1316 ). These facts led some people to believe that Lochana Pandita must have flourished in the 14th century. But the *Puṣpika Sloka* ( colophon ) would conclusively prove that the book dates back to a much earlier period.

*Sārṅgadeva's Saṅgīta-ratnākara* is a work of such importance that all later writers on music have invariably mentioned it in their books. Lochana makes no mention of *Sārṅgadeva's* name as one of the pioneers nor does *Sārṅgadeva* make any mention of Lochana. Of course Lochana's work was not important enough to attract general attention. Besides it was written at a remote part of the country and not very long ago either.

Even the date of *Sārṅgadeva's Saṅgīta-ratnākara* would give rise to a controversy since there is mention of Moslem Ragas in

that book. It has already been mentioned that Sārṅgadeva flourished during the reign of the Yādava King Siṅghaṇa (1210-1247). It is evident, therefore, that his book could not have been written later than 1247. Curiously enough in the second chapter of Saṅgīta-ratnākara we find mention of Rāgas like Turaṣka Toḍi and Turaṣka Gauḍa. If these Rāgas had originated with Amir Khusru then the book must have been written some time between or after 1295-1316. How then are we to solve this problem ?

The real fact, however, is that a living science in constant use has to incorporate into its body all later necessary interpolations. Hence we find in many early works of medical science mention of diseases of later origin and also the process of their treatment. Music undoubtedly is a living and current science. It is not improbable, therefore, that songs and Rāgas of later origin might have been included at a subsequent date in the manuscript in order to make the book complete.

Lochana Pandita also classifies music into two classes viz. classical and popular. This goes to prove that these two distinct kinds of music existed in his time too.

मार्गदेशीविभेदेन गीतं तु द्विविधं मतम् ॥ ( p. 2 )

This statement was followed by specimen Maithila songs which S. Dattatreya Keshava Joshi has left out in the printed version of the Sanskrit book. He has published only the original Sanskrit portion.

Mention of some Moslem Rāgas or Rāgiṇis is to be found both in Lochana Pandita's Rāga-taraṅgiṇī and Sārṅgadeva's Saṅgīta-ratnākara. Now we must either admit that the book was written at a later date or these were later interpolations. A third alternative would be that these Moslem Rāgas and Rāgiṇis might have found their way into India before even the advent of the Moslems into those particular provinces. If in spite of the mention of Moslem rāgas we accept the date of Sārṅgadeva's Saṅgīta-ratnākara with reference to his patron mentioned above then we must naturally fix up Lochana's time with reference to

his patron king. I shall deal later on with the period of Lochana's patron as also the province to which he belonged.

Lochana had written several other books which have not yet been traced. There is a reference even in this book to another work of the name of "Rāga-saṅgīta-saṅgraha" written by him.

एतेषां प्रपंचस्तु मत्कृतरागसंगीतसंग्रहेऽन्वेष्टव्यः ॥ ( p. 2 )

I have not yet been able to trace this book. A large number of books on music was already in existence during the time of Lochana (p. 8). The chapter on स्वरसंज्ञा-संस्थानसंज्ञा is an exhaustive study of the subject which is of considerable interest to specialists in music. ( p. 2, 3 ).

During the time of Lochana the controversy regarding the particular hours of the day assigned for particular rāgas was already afoot. Hence in dealing with the orthodox idea he has given the timing from Tumburu Nāṭaka (p. 12). he has also mentioned the popular view current in his time (p.13). There was such a wide gulf between these two view-points that even to Lochana they appeared to be irreconcilable.

Although Tumburu Nāṭaka is an old work its views are liberal enough. Possibly that is why Lochana has enthusiastically quoted its views. In Tumburu Nāṭaka we find that a language takes up numerous forms according to slight dialectical changes. Likewise the rāgas too, reveal protean forms with slight changes effected in course of time. One could hardly give an exhaustive list of rāgas.

देशभाषाविभेदाश्च रागसंख्या न विद्यते ।

न रागाणां न तालानामंतः कुत्रापि दृश्यते ॥ ( p.13. )

Tumburu Nāṭaka appears to have been produced in the eastern provinces ; because there is mention in it of the festival of Durgā Pūjā. There is mention also of invocation songs to be sung in the morning during the fortnight preceding the festival.

इदृस्थानं समारभ्य यावद्दुर्गामहोत्सवम् ॥ ( p.12. )



In the province of Gauḍa or Bengal the rigours of the Sāstras were not rigid enough. Hence academic scholars who clung strictly to the Sāstras could never tolerate the liberal attitude of this province. Tumburu Nāṭaka, too, fixes up the timing of different rāgas not according to śāstric injunction but according to the suitability of notes and tunes.

यथा काले समारब्धं गीतं भवति रंजकम् ॥ ( p.13. )

Of course on festive occasions songs for morning, evening or night have to be selected in conformity with the occasion. At court functions, too, it may depend mostly on the royal wish. Hence festivities and royal courts are exceptional cases where ordinary canons of timing cannot hold good.

रंगभूमौ नृपाज्ञायां कालदोषो न विद्यते ॥ ( p. 13. )

Lochana's book includes a discussion on "Janaka" (original) and "Janya" (derivative) rāgas. It would appear as if he is referring to South Indian views. But Dravidian culture is inseparably mixed up with that of Bengal. The Sena Kings of Bengal originally hailed from the Carnatic and Lochana was a protégé of the Sena Kings. Hence there is nothing unusual in finding South Indian views in his book. The Kīrtana Tālas of Bengal do not conform to those of Northern India.

Pundita Bhimrao Sastri formerly Professor of Music at Santiniketan collected the notations of Jayadeva's songs from those families where it had been carefully preserved. On examining these Ācharya Bhatakhāṇḍe exclaimed, "How is that? These musical Tālas belong to Mālābāra".

A great master of music and dancing Jayadeva was rightly called, "Padmāvati-Chraṇa-Chāraṇa-Chakravartī." We find mention of the following rāgas in Gīta Govinda : Gurjarī, Vasanta, Mālavagaḍa, Devī-Barāḍī, Karnāṭa, Deśākha, Bhairavī, Rāma kirī, Barāḍī, Goṇḍa-kirī, Mālava, Deśa-Barāḍī and Vibhāsa etc. Tālas like Daśakuśī, Lofā etc. which were in vogue during

the time of Sri Chaitanya are not found in Gīta-Govinda. On the other hand Tālas like निःसर etc. found in Gīta Govinda are not in use in later ages. Tālas like Nihāsāra, Yati, Ekatāla, Rūpaka, Ekatāli, Astatāla are generally associated with Gītagovinda's music.

Books like Nārāyana tirtha's 'Krishṇalīlā taraṅgiṇī, Rāmdāsa Swāmi's Bhadrāchaliya Kīrtana, Bhakta Purandara Bithala's "Dever Nāmas" follow in the footsteps of Gītagovinda. But Jayadeva still remains the undisputed master in the field of Sanskrit Kīrtanas. Sri Chaitanya owes not a little to the Kīrtana songs of Jayadeva, Vidyāpati and Chandidās. These three persons are the main stays of the Vaishnavas in Bengal. The renown enjoyed by Jayadeva throughout India is really Bengal's pride. Jayadeva was the contemporary of Lakshmaṇa Sena, the King of Bengal. In the introduction of Gīta Govinda, Jayadeva had mentioned the names of Umāpati Dhara, Śaraṇa, Āchārya Govardhana, Kavirāja Dhoyi, ( Sloka 4 ) as his contemporary luminaries. Lochana flourished during the reign of Lakshmaṇa Sen's father.

I am not aware of other famous Masters of music born in Bengal but Mangeśa Telanga had mentioned a book Nāda Dīpikā by Bhattacharya in the appendix of his work 'Sangītamakaranda.'

It is only because Lochana was a native of Bengal that he quoted with so much care the 'Āgamani' tunes sung in Devī Paksha or the fortnight during which the Durgā Pūjā festival is held.

*Translated from the original Bengali by Hirendranath Dutta  
and Chandikaprasad Banerjee.*

## WALL-PAINTING IN ANCIENT CHINA

*By* Jibendra Kumar Guha

It is evident from the chronicles of the two Handynasties that the Imperial Palaces or the public buildings in China during the Han period were decorated with wall-paintings. Mons. Oswald Siren in his "History of Early Chinese Painting" ( pp. i-ii ) has ransacked the evidence of these 'Chronicles' and informs us that the "motives of the wall-paintings were of an allegorical or moralizing tenor, and they were executed for the edification of the rulers and their subjects or as records of important events and ancient personalities. Pictures of a similar kind may also have been executed in the tombs of important peoples which were arranged as dwellings for the terrestrial soul of the departed."

"The wall-paintings in the palaces of the earliest Han emperors as well as those executed for their predecessor Ch'in Shih Hung Ti, represented mainly mythological motives and similar subjects were also painted in the Ling-Kuang palace of Prince Linyu Shantung ( c. 154-129 B. C. )." ( Siren )

All these monumental evidences of wall-painting in ancient China have been destroyed or have been otherwise lost. "These have become known through versified description of the Poet Wang-yen-shou who mentioned Heaven and Earth, strange spirits of the Sea, gods of the hills, the five dragons with joined wings ..... etc., a highly fantastic picture chronicle based on the ancient mythological or quasi-historical traditions of the country."

The general arrangement of and the manner in which such motives were treated are also known to us through some of the reliefs which decorated the mortuary chambers of the Wu family at Chiahsiang in Shantūng.

"The later emperors of the Western Han dynasty ( c 207 B.C.-20 A.D.) seem to have preferred portraits of demons, men, generals and historical characters such as Chao-chung-Kuo, Confucious and his several disciples, and this urge for historical

pictures increased in vogue during the reign of the Eastern Han dynasty ( c 25 A. D. -221 A. D. ) in Lo-yang. But they also had a moral importance and it is specially found of Emperor Shun Ti's ( 126-144 A. D. ) consort that she had pictures of dutiful wives arranged on either side of her room. Under the art loving Ming-Ti a large composition relating to the first introduction of Buddhism in China was executed in the White Horse Temple and under one of his later successors Ling-Ti ( 168-188 A. D. ) portraits of Confucius and his disciples were again executed in a hall at Loyang." ( Siren )

I have quoted extensively from Mons. O. Siren's "Early Chinese Painting" ( Vol. I ) only to convince the reader of the prevalence and importance of wall-painting in the cultural life of China during the two Han dynasties ( c 207 B. C. -221 A. D. ).

This period corresponds roughly with the reigns of the Maurya, Śuṅga and Kusan emperors in Northern India and the Śātavāhana rulers in Deccan. It is also interesting to observe that under the emperors of Northern India, our country saw a great revival of her artistic traditions specially in sculpture and architecture. Of the condition of wall-painting in Northern India during this period, we know practically nothing. The earliest wall-paintings now extant in India are found in caves IX and X at Ajanta done probably under the Śātavāhanas. These are dated at c 100 B. C. ( the same as the Stupa at Sāñcī ). The treatment of these wall-paintings bespeaks of an established art—an art which had long ago forsaken its experimental stage. Under the circumstances I may not be wrong when I assume that wall-painting was known in Northern India during this period ; other evidences are also forthcoming.

The most important data for the history and chronological sequence of wall-paintings in Northern India are furnished by the finds of the Greco-Buddhist ( ? ) wall-paintings by the members of the French Archaeological Mission led by Messrs. Hackin, Goddard and other eminent archaeologists in Afghanistan. The archaeological explorations which they carried out at

Bamizan, and other Afgan sites have unearthed many reliable evidences about the prevalence of wall-painting in the then North-Western India ( Gāndhārā ). These paintings may be chronologically placed in some of the first six centuries of Christian era ( cf. Hiuen—Tsang's account ). The multi-coloured specimens of some of these wall-paintings are reproduced in the report published by this Mission ( vide coloured plates in *Memoires de la delegation Francaise en Afghanistan*, Tome II ). These wall-paintings help us to some extent in forming a faint idea about the condition and prevalence of wall-paintings in Northern India about the beginning of the Christian era. Aesthetically judged from these polychrome reproductions, these paintings in Afghanistan are very weak so far as the drawing of the figures, and the colour-scheme go. In other words, these paintings seem to be passing through an experimental stage. Here lies perhaps the main difference between the early South Indian and North Indian paintings. The former was an established art and had finished with experimentation but the latter was only passing through the experimental stage. So it appears that the tradition of wall-painting developed earlier in South India than in the North. But in the absence of any more solid evidence these are mere inferences and the absence of any early wall-paintings in Northern India still remains one of the major problems for the student of the history of wall-paintings in India.

Here a question may be raised. Why have the wall-paintings in China been completely destroyed? So far as I can guess, the reason is either

- (1) The surfaces of these wall-paintings were less permanently executed than those of Egypt or Southern India and so in course of two-thousand years they were gradually destroyed; or
- (2) The frequency of barbarian invasions.

These two factors perhaps contributed to the disappearance of wall-paintings in Northern India also.

Another interesting comparison between wall-paintings of China and India may be made. So far as we can gather from

the Han 'Chronicles' the subject matter of wall-paintings in China was mostly of the following three types, viz ;

(a) Mythological,

(b) Secular,

or (c) Religious i. e. connected with Confucius.

It is only during the latter Hans that Buddhism entered China and we have Buddhistic subjects from the 2nd century A. D. onwards. But the subject-matter of the wall-paintings in caves IX and X at Ajanta (2nd. century B. C. 4) are without exception Buddhistic though not monotonous.

I wish here to remark in passing that Mons. O. Siren's theory that in the absence of wall-painting in China of the Han period, five brickslabs of this period, decorated on both faces with paintings on a white surface, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston could be taken as specimens of the style of ancient Chinese wall-paintings, seems to be misleading. My objection to this is based on the ground that the smallness of the area of the surface of the stone or brick slabs would surely restrict the freedom of artists who would surely be at home on larger surfaces. These slab-decorations were more or less miniature paintings but not wall-paintings in the proper sense of the term.

"From the scanty remains of literary records that are known to us, it may be concluded that Chinese painting passed through a rather important evolution during the four centuries (i. e. from the 3rd. cent. B. C. to the 3rd. cent. A. D.) of the two Han dynasties. At the beginning of this era pictorial art seems to have been mostly in the nature of large wall-paintings in the Imperial palaces, ancestral halls and similar other buildings and the purpose of it was more of a didactic than decorative kind. The step from such pictures to the representation of ceremonial meals and the like or other important events from the life of the departed (e. g. in the Hall of Chu-wei) may not have seemed very long. Yet it must have become an inducement for the painters to a closer observation of actual life and character, and a freer development of their power of

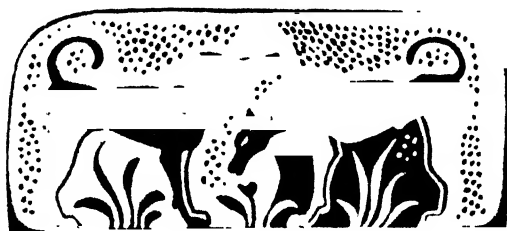
representation. And once this new road was found, it led to a rapid progress particularly in the direction of characterisation and the representation of space, plastic form and movement." ( Siren ).

An interesting question may now be raised. Why did the Chinese who achieved a fairly high standard in the art of painting walls, stop all on a sudden from exhibiting their skill in this particular branch of art ? We can only guess an answer. Even during the Han period when the art of wall-painting was at its pinnacle in China, a section of the public openly denounced it and instead began praising lavishly scroll-works and paintings on bamboo-tablets. The philosopher Wang-Chung (1st. cent. A.D.) most probably voiced this section of public opinion when he said, "When one looks at paintings of ancient people, one sees only the faces of the dead men, but one does not perceive their movements ; it is far better to read about their doctrines as written on bamboo tablets, and silk scrolls than to look at their pictures on walls." ( trans. Siren ). It is probable that in centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, a section of the Chinese people preferred portable paintings for their value as missionary propaganda. We should also bear in mind that Buddhism entered China sometime about this period following in the wake of Asoke's preachers whom the Emperor had sent to all parts of the then known globe. It follows that in time, this lamentation of the philosopher Wang Chung attracted sympathisers and the art of wall-painting in post-Han China came to be neglected by its adherents and has since been completely lost.

It is a great misfortune for art-lovers that the Chinese who were so skilful in the art of wall-painting gave it up on account of religious propaganda. At this point a contrast with India's pictorial tradition becomes evident. Almost all the great religions which have their origin in India e. g. Buddhism ( Ajanta ), Brahmanical Hinduism ( Ellora, Badami ) Jainism ( Sittannavasal ) sought to carry on their missionary

propaganda through the vehicle of wall-painting. In those days when cinematographic art was unknown, large scale wall-paintings perhaps were best suited to attract the masses. I am not, of course, dogmatizing on the point of wall-paintings as being the sole medium for this purpose ; there were miniature paintings, scroll-paintings, and theatres etc. also, but the artists of India unlike their Chinese brethren did not forsake the monumental art of wall-painting for other portable media.

As a result, we lose sight of Chinese painting for about a millennium ( from the Hans to the Sung ) ; though mingled with Indian art traditions they appear occasionally in China's borders (not in China proper) e. g. in the caves of 1000 Buddhas at Tun Huang in Chinese Turkestan and in the Horiyuji temple in Nara, Japan. Chinese scroll and banner paintings appear full fledged from the Sung dynasty downwards.





## REVIEWS

### *RABINDRANATH THROUGH WESTERN EYES :*

By Dr. A. ARONSON, M. A., ( Cantab ) WITH A  
PREFACE BY DR. AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY,  
( KITABISTAN, ALLAHABAD. )

Demy 16 : I-XV + 158 pages. Price Rs. 4-8-0 only.

Those who find a fundamental and absolutely irreconcilable difference between Western and Eastern culture are likely to consider Rabindranath's eminence in the West as a phenomenon that demands a special explanation. They would naturally attribute the Western reputation of an Indian poet to something more than the greatness of the poet himself. They would seek for the secret of this appreciation in the greatness or strangeness of the culture which the poet represents. Some Europeans, we know, have found in Rabindranath's reputation in the West a remarkable instance of a crazy passion for the strange and the exotic. Some Indians would, perhaps, suggest that a European's appreciation of his poetry involves a rejection, conscious or unconscious, of the Western culture ; to them it seems that to enjoy the verses of *Gitanjali* is to embrace a philosophy that is alien to the European mind. An earnest enquirer into these questions will have to discuss the nature of the dichotomy that may exist between the Eastern and the Western mind, and define the relation between aesthetic appreciation and cultural affiliations ; he will have to see, whether or no, poetry has a frontier. "The Common Reader, who dwells within each one of us" will, however, assume that the appeal of all great poetry is universal ; that a Christian's appreciation of Sophocles does not and necessarily imply any reversion to paganism ; that a Hindu does not become an Israelite when he delights in the Book of Psalms. All great poetry has a spiritual content, an appreciable substratum of philosophy which voices the aspirations of universal humanity. An Indian need not find in the poetry of Wordsworth anything that is exotic, anything that he may not easily appreciate for his not being an Englishman or a Christian. Similarly, an Englishman is not debarred from appreciating the poetry of Rabindranath by the fact of his not being an Indian and a Hindu. But a critic will have, nevertheless, to consider the relation of Rabindranath's poetry to the culture from which it has sprung and evaluate its significance to the West. Dr. Aronson has not, however, raised these issues in his book. He has strayed into other fields and has gathered his harvest from newspapers and periodicals. He has attempted, to quote his own words, "a study in values." And what are these "values"

according to Dr. Aronson? They are "the response of people to a poet beyond all the standards of literary criticism and aesthetic." We are frankly unable to appreciate this conception of a people's evaluation of a poet. Nor do we appreciate his relying mainly on "cuttings from newspapers, periodicals and magazines" as "a test of the critical intelligence of the West" with regard to an Indian poet. Dr. Aronson's book would suggest that the reputation of Rabindranath in the Western countries has no basis in any sound literary taste, and that much of it is due to a craze for oriental mysticism. We demur. It has never occurred to us that the appreciation which Rabindranath has received from Europe and America may not be genuine. We have no doubt come upon some carping criticisms of the Poet in a section of the European and American Press, but they have never led us to question the genuineness of the appreciation of the Poet by the West; nor has it appeared to us that Rabindranath's "sudden leap to fame in Europe was the most severe test of sensibility that the West had to pass through during the last twenty years."

The main thesis of Dr. Aronson, as we have understood it, is this:—

"Political considerations are so intricately bound up with Rabindranath's rise to fame in the West that it is sometimes difficult to separate even the most genuine literary appreciation (or depreciation) of his work from international politics, colonial policy, or the way the Indian market was captured by England or Germany, America or Japan. The literary critic who deals with Rabindranath's rise to fame in the West finds himself all the time in an altogether disconcerting position; for he will have to refer almost all the statements made on Rabindranath in Europe to the then existing national rivalries (and they changed a good deal during these thirty years) to problems of colonial policy, and to the Stock Exchange" (Chapter 1, page 5).

Now, this appears to be a rather curious contention. Who could ever believe that the West's appraisal of the Poet has been affected by international political rivalries? And Dr. Aronson has not substantiated his thesis either. He has not given us any statistical returns to show that the appreciation of Rabindranath had reached the highest point in America or Japan when these countries had attained a favourable balance of trade with India. He has only served us with an amazing and an otherwise entertaining anthology of fatuous gossips and speculations in which some journals and individuals indulged when the poetry and message of Rabindranath were fast gaining ground in the West.

Dr. Aronson, as already pointed out, has placed too great a reliance on Press comments and Press criticisms. These, as he has used them, will

hardly be considered as the authentic verdict of the Western world on Tagore. The journalist has been described as "a gentleman in hurry"; and no hurried estimate of the Press — unilluminated by literary tastes, often prejudiced by racial bias, not unoften ignorant and nearly almost vitiated by the very essence of its ephemeral character — can be accepted as the reaction of the better minds of Europe or America to Rabindranath's literary creations or his message as revealed in his many public utterances in the West. Dr. Aronson has quoted a number of extracts from the English Press which are frankly contemptuous. We cannot, of course, expect every Englishman to be free from prejudice in his attitude towards an Indian poet. And we should not be surprised when a Church journal considers the eminence of Rabindranath as the fulfilment of British missionary efforts in India. No sound critic would take any serious notice of such prejudiced views. For these do not raise any significant literary issue. They may be interesting as examples of how religious bigotry and racial arrogance can vitiate an European's attitude towards a poet of Asia. It is strange that Dr. Aronson should choose some of these views in support of his thesis on the Western estimate of Rabindranath. Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, who had travelled extensively with the Poet in the West, has not failed to point this out in his preface to the book under review. He says : "The author's selection of material has not always convinced me — this personal reference will be excused — on the basis of my experience of tours with the Poet : I could have selected other scripts and impressions to set up a different hypothesis." So could we. He has not for once, strangely enough, referred to "The Golden Book of Tagore" in which some of the finest minds of the Western world have paid their tributes to the Poet. It has not even found a place in his otherwise excellent Tagore Bibliography forming Appendix A of his book. He has quoted a casual and apparently disparaging reference to Rabindranath in Raleigh's essay on Dryden, but he has not referred, for instance, to Edmund Blunden's memoir of Wilfred Owen, which describes the soldier-poet as quoting the lines of *Gitanjali* in farewell to his mother. He has not chosen to tell his readers how Comtesse de Noailles and Clemenceau instinctively turned to *Gitanjali* when the news of the declaration of war by Germany in 1914 was brought to them. He has honoured many literary hacks with copious extracts from their effusions but he has not chosen to remember J. A. Spender, who said : "As an Englishman I like to remember that Rabindranath is within our fold. We too take pride in him. We have need of him."

But this is not all. Dr. Aronson has brought to bear upon his study statements or observations which have no substance in fact. He speaks of

"a poet's name being used in the warfare of political gangsters and upstarts", "the hysterical acclamations of frustrated millions", but nowhere does he elucidate his assertions, or substantiate his statements. Speaking of the award of the Nobel Prize to the Poet in 1913 he writes : "People tried to explain the award by the fact that this was an otherwise uneventful year and that the reading public was ready to welcome any kind of exotic literary adventure." Dr. Aronson has not told us though who these "people" were. He has lumped them up into the vague appellation — "The man in the street." The poor "man in the street" has always been a scapegoat with us journalists. But Dr. Aronson, we thought, was a scholar. Dr. Aronson says that "there is certainly some truth in the assertion that the intelligentsia, not only in England, but all over Europe, were open to any kind of Eastern influence at that time." We wish Dr. Aronson could elucidate this point further.

Dr. Aronson's observations on the German appreciation of Rabindranath do not bear scrutiny. "We must understand", he says, "that his sensational fame in that country was part of an evolution, of a tendency towards the irrational and the pseudo-mystic that started long before 1921 and reached its crisis in the disaster of democratic failure in 1932". Dr. Aronson is almost furiously impatient with the German admiration for Rabindranath. Dr. Amiya Chakravarty in his preface pointedly observes that "Dr. Aronson has, in my opinion, been unfair to pre-1930 Germany and used involved political and racial logic to *explain away* genuine popular enthusiasm for Tagore." (The italics are ours). Dr. Aronson is, we think, particularly unfair to Count Keyserling in whose admiration for Rabindranath we have failed to discover anything that may arouse any suspicion either about its depth or its sincerity.

Dr. Aronson says that there were "political machinations" behind the great reception Rabindranath had in Germany in 1921. He maintains that "there were deliberate attempts to make use of Rabindranath whenever the occasion demanded it and wherever Fascist propaganda thought it fit to introduce his name." The lines which immediately follow these words—"that is how the mind of a people is poisoned and that is how anti-human forces spread their dominion until the whole of a continent is engulfed by the crude psychological method of infantile Fascist regression"—may be a spirited and welcome condemnation of Fascism ; but has it any direct bearing on Rabindranath's literary reputation in Europe ? Is there anything to show that Rabindranath's reception in Germany was mainly or even partly motivated by political factors ? Dr. Aronson suggests that Rabindranath unconsciously acted as a tool in the hands of crafty politicians who

exploited his name in Germany for their political ends ; he says, "unaware of the political machinations behind the stage, Rabindranath was genuinely moved by all the friendship and honour bestowed upon him in Germany ;" he has not, however, adduced a single fact to prove his allegation. One would, perhaps, credit the compatriots of Goethe and Heine with some literary taste to enable them to appreciate the poetry of Rabindranath. The only evidence which Dr. Aronson places before us for proving his case—is the startling and scandalising fact that the songs with which the Poet was greeted at Keyserling's School of Wisdom at Darmstadt were *rehearsed* before they were sung ! Did Rabindranath know, asks Dr. Aronson in righteous indignation, "that most of these songs were of a narrow nationalistic kind, that the rather nauseating sentimentality of the summer morning on the mountain at Darmstadt, was not in the least spontaneous but was very well rehearsed beforehand, specially the singing of the German National Anthem ?" Only a deeply prejudiced mind can have recourse to such fatuities.

Dr. Aronson has quoted scribes who find nothing in Rabindranath's poetry for which the Poet is not directly indebted to "The English Raj" and Christianity ; who insinuate that it was the intervention of an anti-British Swedish Prince which secured him the Nobel Prize ; who believe that Rabindranath was a Jew ( whose real name was Rabbi Nathan and that he married a rich Jewess, the daughter of a bamboo-seller ) ; and who describe him as a "literary imposter." And if Dr. Aronson has set himself the task of exposing the absurdity and silliness of these statements, which would be something far less than what the title of his book indicates, he should not have seen in Rabindranath's reputation in the West almost only "ignorance", "contempt" and "lack of humility". All the same, he has left uncontradicted many a canard potentially mischievous that he has honoured with a place in his study.

Dr. Aronson, we hope, will pardon us if we confess to our disappointment with his book. We are afraid that his work will do more harm than good. It will create misconceptions and misunderstandings that his partially redeeming chapter on "The Test of Sensibility" will hardly succeed in removing. And even then the way in which he explains the reaction of Yeats and Ezra Pound\* to Tagore leaves us puzzled. We are told that their appreciation of Rabindranath's poetry "meant an intense critical effort", and that "their sensibility had to undergo certain changes first,

\* Writes W. Rothenstein in his *Men And Memories* ( 1900-1922 ) :—"The young poets came to sit at Tagore's feet—Ezra Pound the most assiduously." This refers to Rabindranath's *Gitanjali*-visit to Europe on 1912.

before they could reach that intellectual detachment which alone would enable them beyond the 'reality' of appearances, beyond even 'the real Eastern note' into the very essence of Rabindranath's poetry". Dr. Aronson does not, of course, tell us why this should be so. He takes for granted the existence of an altogether separate Eastern and Western sensibility, though nowhere he offers a definition of or differentiation between the two. Ezra Pound's appreciation of Tagore's poetry as revealed in his article in the *Fortnightly Review* (reproduced in the Tagore 80th Birthday Number of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*), should, we think, be looked upon as one of the soundest literary approaches to Rabindranath's poetry by an English man of letters. There is no 'effort' in it, no testing of sensibility, no straining for reaching intellectual detachment, that an unprejudiced mind could see. But we forget that Dr. Aronson is out to prove his thesis.

Dr. Aronson has been praised as having "written with eloquence" (p. viii). We wish there was a little less eloquence and a little more freedom from bias and preconceived notions. He himself admits that he has "chosen only a few relevant quotations out of the large material that was at our disposal" (page 117, the italics are ours). He has "deliberately left out the comment made by Sanskrit scholars or Indologists" for, as he says, "theirs is an exclusive esoteric attitude." And among them, strangely enough, he has included Edward Thompson—the English biographer of the Poet. Dr. Thompson would, we believe, be the first to protest against his being dubbed an "Indologist" and described as a "Sanskrit scholar." But the omission to take note of Edward Thompson's fine estimate of Rabindranath as a poet is strange to account for. So is the omission of any reference to Prof. Lesny's study of Tagore. They have been excluded by Dr. Aronson as they were, according to him, "preoccupied with a purely academic interpretation of Rabindranath's work"! Dr. Aronson is, of course, differently preoccupied,—with the self-imposed task of "elucidating the causes that led to the rapid decline of Rabindranath's fame in the West," of course, against the background of "the insane enthusiasm of a whole people driven to hysterical acclamation" and the "subtle and cunning methods of political gangsters and upstarts." The thesis is always there! But we must thank Dr. Aronson for his peroration though it is hardly relevant in the context of his production and is certainly not borne out by what has gone before. He speaks of "the great ones in this declining civilisation, those who still carry their head erect and are not prepared to bow down to the evil forces in man bowing down to Rabindranath; artists and scholars, scientists and politicians shaking hands with him across

oceans and continents, across the man-made frontiers that still separate them, across century which is always one and indivisible.' But nowhere we have met them in Dr. Aronson's pages. Of the hundreds of letters from them to Rabinathanath preserved in his son's collection at Santiniketan he has quoted only two. We have no reasons to believe that the rest were inaccessible to Dr. Aronson.

AMAL HOME

*THE ĀGAMAŚĀSTRA OF GAUḌAPĀDA* : Edited with  
English Translation and Annotation by Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit  
Vidhushekara Bhattacharya, Asutosh Professor of Sanskrit of the  
University of Calcutta, and included in the publications of the  
University.

It is a delightful surprise to find that such a learned work of inestimable value has been presented in print, under the difficult situation of the day affecting publications, to the Oriental scholars interested in critical studies of Indian Thought and Religion. The Editor himself has given in his own Preface a brief account of the circumstances which weighed with him to bring out the volume and the previous preparations he had been making continuously for years to the purpose. The contents of the work cover various matters connected with the main treatise of which the lengthy Introduction is most valuable. It gives ample evidence of the scholarly earnestness and a sound critical spirit which runs throughout this Introduction. The discussions he has undertaken on several important disputed points clearly evince what extensive studies he has made for the purpose and what labour he has persistently spent for years to collect and elaborate the materials on which he bases the conclusions he has come to ultimately. Yet he is far from being dogmatic, as will appear from the scholarly diffidence with which he offers them in the Preface and the Introductions not to speak of the main body of the text.

This Introduction by itself sets rather a model of what any research in ancient literature should be to make it worthy of the name. Research-scholars in the field would do well to imitate him here to be able to contribute anything new and valuable on subjects undertaken by them. One may not be entirely in agreement with the learned writer. But no one can help admiring the scholarly efforts he has made to present honestly what he has

attempted to establish as his standpoint. This standpoint is wellknown to those who have followed up his writings on the subject contributed hitherto to Bengali and English Journals and Periodicals. Now we have in this Introduction and the Annotations, offered on the Texts of the main work, the *Āgamaśāstra* comprising the *Kārikās* attributed to an ancient author named Gauḍapāda. These *Kārikās* were hitherto regarded by most scholars, old and new, as a commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. This position has not, however, been unanimously adopted by even all ancient scholars and writers, as the present author has shewn by quotations at the very beginning of the Introduction. The standpoint adopted by him, on various reasonable grounds, is that the *Kārikās* form the earlier basis of the text of the 12 prose passages forming the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. Their relationship is rather the reverse of the usual view. It is of no use here going into the intricate discussions on the point. They have to be carefully followed up by a student of the subject. The elaborate discussions undertaken here as to the name and time of the author of the *Kārikās* and his actual relationship to Śaṅkara—the celebrated author of the masterly commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, are both interesting and enlightening. The tradition generally accepted on the matter places the author Gauḍapāda—as the teacher of the *Guru* of Śaṅkara through whom the latter was influenced in his Vedantic position. This influence is supposed to relate particularly to his *Māyāvāda*, though not entirely as is pointed out by the present author in his Introduction. Śaṅkara, as is well-known to the students of the other main schools of Vedānta, has been 'stigmatised' for his position of *Māyāvāda* as a 'disguised' Buddhist ( "*Prachhanna-Bauddha*" ). The question is how far this sweeping way of 'stigmatisation' of Śaṅkara can be justified. The *Māyāvāda* may be supposed to have come down directly to Śaṅkara through the teachings of Gauḍapāda as presented in the *Āgamaśāstra* particularly in the parts III & IV ( *Prakaraṇas* ) of the *Kārikās*. The present author's own position on the question is, however, found to be put very cautiously in the Introduction, as the following lines will show :

"It is, however, to be noted that Gauḍapāda, though much influenced by the Buddhistic thoughts, maintains his position as a Vedantist. It is true that he advocates the *Vijñānavāda*, but certainly it is originally adopted by him from the Upaniṣadic source, i. e. BU, IV. 3. 14 on which is based his fundamental statement ( II. 5 ) that the two states, dream and waking, are one. This Upaniṣadic seed of Idealism being influenced by its elaborate system in Buddhism and the vast literature on it by the Buddhist teachers flourished before Gauḍapāda, has developed into what we now find in the *Āgamaśāstra*. But when there are the above and the similar germs of ideal-



ism in the Upaniṣads, it must be accepted that it did not first originate with the Buddhists, though it has much developed in their system later on.' ( Introduction pages 51-2 ).

In his Annotations on the *Kārikās*, particularly on those of Part IV, the author has shewn by a number of quotations from Buddhistic works of *Vijñānavādins* and *Mādhyamikas*, who are supposed to have preceded Gauḍapāda. Now the latter's mode of arguments and the standpoint based thereon are so similar in many respects that it is no wonder that the latter's position, even as a Vedantist, should be considered as influenced by the Buddhists concerned, and that Śaṅkara following Gauḍapāda in his fundamental position be regarded as a 'disguised' Buddhist. But the mere fact of similarity ( or even of identity ) of passages between those of the *Kārikās* and of the Buddhistic works quoted does not by itself establish infallibly any direct influence. The author himself too, it is to be noted, does not appear to endorse this position entirely from what he states in the last sentence of the passages quoted above.

From this statement it appears that the present author does not deny the possibility of the earlier schools of Buddhism and these school and Gauḍapāda's similar Vedantic position might both have been influenced by an earlier school of thought to which Aśaṅga and Nāgārjuna on the one hand and Gauḍapāda on the other belonged, only the former using the influence to promote their position of Buddhism and the latter his own position of Vedanta. This might be a possible interpretation, and I am glad to find that the present author does not virtually object to this supposition. The question that remains to consider now in this connection is the *Ajātivāda* ( the doctrine of Non-origination ) which appears to be a unique position of the *Vijñānavāda* school of Buddhism. Gauḍapāda certainly accepts this position, as his elaborate discussions in Part IV of the *Kārikās* in support of the doctrine discloses. Here no doubt the influence of the Buddhistic position is apparent. But it could not be surmised that this very doctrine might have come down to the Buddhists themselves from a still earlier school of *Upaniṣadic* thought started, say, by Yājñavalkya, whose place in the *Vṛihadāranyaka* Vedantic teachings appears to be very prominent. This is but a possible suggestion, which might be utilised for further research on the subject. And the only person who may be credited to be able to undertake this task is our assiduous learned Pandit who has already worked as much in the field, the valuable results of which we find in the present publication of the *Āgamaśāstra*.

This publication does not, we are glad to find, confine itself merely to the *Āgamaśāstra* with the Introduction, English translation of and critical annotations on the *Kārikās*. It comprises also, in the Appendices, the

*Mandūkya Upaniṣad* with an original English translation of its texts, and other matters so indispensable to earnest students undertaking proper study of the main work. In fact, the learned editor has left out nothing which is important for the purpose. And our hearty thanks are also due to him for all this scholarly labour.

P. B. Adhikari.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF MUSICAL SCALES :

By Alain Danielou. The India Society. London 1943.

pp. 279. Price, Rs. 15/-.

This is a very remarkable book. As the title implies, the author is concerned with an analysis of the various musical scales as they exist in the musical traditions of either East or West. The problems raised must necessarily be of an extremely complex kind. For, as the author remarks at the very beginning of his book "there remain in the West no data on the nature of music". Feelings or emotions evoked by sounds or combinations of sounds are simply taken for granted and no attempt is made to search for the causes. The result of such an attitude are fragmentary experiments which by their very nature exclude the possibility of formulating those general musical laws which are of universal value and which would establish a logical connection between the various traditional musical scales in existence.

Traditional metaphysics, therefore, provide the author with the data of what he calls musical symbolism. Such an approach to the study of musical scales must lead him to a rejection of commonly accepted western standards of harmony and the "natural scale". Much of what we have been used to take for granted in western music is of an arbitrary origin and not in accordance with the traditional theories of music. For, according to the theorists of Hindu music "the subtle correspondence between the laws of nature and the laws of harmony, between the modes of music and the modes of our sentiments, can be experimentally discovered", but, furthermore, "they can be completely and logically explained only by traditional metaphysics whose source is in the Veda".

The scope of M. Danielou's work is, therefore, necessarily large. Beginning with a short discussion of "metaphysical correspondences" (which some might like to be elaborated even further in any subsequent

edition of the book ) the second and the third part deal with *The Conflict of Musical Systems* and *The Measure of Intervals and Harmonic Sounds* respectively. These parts, as also the following, are necessarily very technical and a layman may not always be able to follow the argument. But then, this is obviously not a book written for laymen. Follow detailed discussions of Chinese, Hindu, and Greek musical systems as well as an analysis of the western scale and the "equal temperament". An exhaustive bibliography at the end completes the volume.

It is hardly possible within the limited space at our disposal to enter into a discussion on those points which may seem controversial. Suffice it to say that this is a book which should not be missed by anyone interested in the study of musical systems and their relation with one another. The author has, in his short Foreword, summarised his main argument and we cannot do better than to let him speak for himself: "... It is in music only that this connection between physical reality and metaphysical principles is evident. Music was, therefore, justly considered by the ancients as the key to all sciences and arts, the link between metaphysics and physics, through which the universal laws and their multiple applications could be understood. In the present book we try to give some idea of these universal laws which the numbers represent, and to make a rapid survey of their application to music in the different traditions."

A. A.

### *THE DISCIPLES OF RAMAKRISHNA :*

Published by Swami Pavitrananda, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati,  
Almora, Himalayas. pp. 476 ; Price Rs. 4/-.

MAHATMA GANDHI presiding over a celebration of the Ramkrishna Sevashrama at Rangoon paid a tribute to the Ramakrishna Mission in these words : "Wherever I go, the followers of Ramakrishna invite me to meet with them ; I feel that their blessings go with me. Their relief works are spread over India. There is no point where they are not established on a large or a small scale. I pray God that they will grow, and that to them will be united all who are pure and love India." This was in 1929. Since then of course its activities have covered still wider fields, and, as pointed out by Romain Rolland, the spiritual harvest of Ramakrishna was

garnered by Vivekananda's own hands and placed under the protection of wise and laborious farmers who knew how to keep it pure and to bring it to fruition.' The book under review deals with the life-stories of "those wise and laborious farmers" who succeeded in bringing to fruition the great ideals of Ramakrishna—Vivekananda through their devoted and self-effacing work in connection with the manifold activities of the Mission.

The majority of these disciples, again in the language of Romain Rolland, "belonged to the literal professions, to the Brahmin aristocracy or to the rich middle class of Bengal and several had been fashioned by the Brahmo Samaj;" and Ramakrishna showed himself very strict in the choice of his disciples "for they were the way whereon the feet of humanity was to march." It is natural, therefore to desire to know something of the lives of these disciples who are now no more. They have left worthy successors however, some of whom have paid their tribute to their masters in recounting their lives in the pages of this book. These "lives", although they are from the pen of different writers are written in an uniformly lucid style and they make very interesting reading indeed. The reader is made acquainted with the early struggles of these youthful disciples of Ramakrishna to attain perfection, their wanderings through the length and breadth of India their *tapasyas* in the depths of the Himalayas. Their austere life, their catholicity, their faith in the mission of their Master and their ultimate surrender—though not without a struggle in the case of some—to the call of their leader Vivekananda to give up the life of spiritual seclusion and take up instead humanitarian work on an organized basis—all these will appear to have an instructive value too all their own.

The book contains the lives of fifteen monastic disciples, three lay and four women disciples of Ramakrishna. This however leaves incomplete the list of all those whom Ramakrishna acknowledged as his own and whose names will be found carefully enumerated in Romain Rolland's book on Ramakrishna—Vivekananda. We hope in the second edition or in a second volume, the defect will be made good.

The general get-up and printing of the book leave nothing to be desired. They are on a par with all the other publications of the Ramakrishna Mission. The book is properly illustrated and the colour-scheme of the jacket-cover is quite appropriate.

Kanti Ghosh.

# THE CRISIS OF THE MODERN WORLD, RENE GUENON :

*Publishers : Luzac & Co. 1942.*

THIS is a remarkable book, remarkable alike for its diagnosis of the disease from which the present-day world is suffering, and for the remedy which it suggests. Unlike other books dealing with the subject, it does not find the cause of the present crisis of the world in political or economic or social factors, but these factors are in its opinion only outward manifestations of more deep-rooted causes. The ultimate ground of all these factors is to be sought in the outlook of an age. Consequently, if there is anything fundamentally wrong about any age, the cause of it is to be sought in the wrong outlook of that age.

Keeping in mind this fundamental truth, our problem reduces itself to this : What is the outlook of the present-day world, and wherein is it defective ? The character of this outlook our author expresses in one word, *Profane*, which absolves him from the duty of showing wherein it is found defective, for what is profane stands self-condemned, and it does not require any elaborate argument to prove that it is wrong. All outlooks he classes under two heads : Sacred and Profane. These are in fact his Ormuzd and Ahriman. Profane is the outlook that relies solely upon reason, which believes only in human powers, which shows contempt for everything superhuman, as well as for authority and tradition, and which sets up the individual judgment as the arbiter of everything. The opposite of 'profane' is 'sacred'. Sacred is the outlook that dethrones reason and sets up intuition, which has faith in superhuman powers, as well as in authority and tradition, and which shows contempt for the individual judgment. A synonym for 'sacred' is 'traditional', and the latter word is generally used by our author to indicate the outlook which he considers right.

He diagnoses the malady of the modern world as the substitution of the profane for the traditional outlook. The remedy, consequently, is very simple : Replace the profane by the traditional outlook, and the world will be set right again. There is another pair of opposites in his vocabulary which serves the same purpose as the words 'sacred' and 'profane'. These are East and West. They are not with him mere geographical distinctions, but they express two fundamental differences of outlook. The East, according to him, has throughout its long history been loyal to the traditional outlook, whereas the West has departed from it. Not that the West never had faith in it. It did have it in abundant measure in very ancient times and again in the Middle Ages, but it has lost it ever since the beginning of the Renaissance. The opposition between the East and the West, therefore, is

of recent origin, but although recent, it is now a fundamental one. The salvation of the West, in our author's view, lies in its return to tradition, which means the same as coming to an understanding with the East, for it is in the East that tradition is still living. To quote his own words: "If the West should somehow or other return to tradition, its opposition to the East would thereby be resolved and cease to exist, as it has its roots only in the Western deviation and is in reality merely the opposition between the traditional and the anti-traditional outlooks. Therefore, contrary to the opinion of those to whom we have been alluding, one of the first results of a return to tradition would be to make an understanding with the East immediately feasible, such as is possible between all civilizations that possess comparable or equivalent elements, and only between such, since these elements form the only ground on which an effective understanding can be based" ( pp. 43-44 ). In another place ( pp. 42-43 ) he says, "The lost tradition ( of the West ) can be restored and brought to life again only by contact with the living traditional spirit, and, as we have already said, it is only in the East that this spirit is still fully alive".

Although the picture he draws of the modern world is extremely gloomy, yet he asks us to derive consolation from the thought that just as it is darkest before dawn, so the very gloominess of the present age is a sure sign that a New Age is not far off. This Kali Yuga, he says, in which we are living is about to end, and the Satya Yuga, is coming. Here he comes somewhat near Sri Aurobindo, who also triumphantly proclaims ( though for totally different reasons ) the advent of a New Age as a thing decreed and destined to occur.

Our author believes that the traditional outlook in Greece was lost when the 'philosophers' came into the field. The main work of these 'philosophers' was to destroy whatever traces there were left of the traditional outlook. Pythagoras partially restored this outlook, but the general trend of Greek thought was anti-traditional. It leaned more and more upon reason, and consequently drifted further and further away from the traditional outlook. Our author, in fact, has a very poor opinion of philosophy, whether Greek or modern. Thus at p. 42 he says, "A philosophy, though it be all that it should be, has no right to this designation ( traditional ), since it is entirely of the rational order even when it does not deny all that goes beyond this order. It is no more than a structure raised by human individuals without revelation or inspiration of any sort, which means, to condense all into a single word, that it is essentially "profane." This prejudice against philosophy is one of the features of this book.

The Renaissance, which prided itself upon its success in reviving the

culture of the Greeks, really completed, according to our author, the process of decadence which had started with the advent of the Milesian philosophers in Greece. It gave currency to a point of view called Humanism, of which the modern seem to be extremely proud. But when closely examined, this humanism shows itself to be one of the most decadent types of culture that it has been the misfortune of human history to exhibit. For humanism means contempt for everything superhuman, for everything which transcends the purely human point of view. It for ever shuts man within the limits of his narrow interests and thus permanently blocks the path of his further progress. Due to its following the lead of humanism, the author thinks, "modern civilization has gone downwards step by step until it has ended by sinking to the level of the lowest elements in man and aiming at little more than the satisfaction of the needs inherent in the material side of his nature, an aim which is, in any case, quite illusory, as it constantly creates more artificial needs than it can satisfy" ( p. 26 ).

So far so good. But it should be borne in mind that if to-day a return to the traditional outlook is needed, it is because of the exaggerations of the rational or scientific outlook. If the rationalism of the present day had not gone to the extreme of shutting out all other approaches to truth, the cry 'Back to tradition' would not have been so insistent or so significant. It is because of the excesses of the rationalistic movement that the need of a counter-movement is so keenly felt. Rationalism by itself is nothing objectionable. Reason undoubtedly has played, and will play a civilizing mission. In our enthusiasm for tradition we should not forget that it is sometimes necessary to go against tradition, and that it is by doing so that man has acquired the position which he has done to-day. Tagore in his *Religion of Man* has pointed this out very clearly. He shows how man in the early stages of his evolution broke with tradition by adopting an erect gait, instead of crawling. "And it is significant," says Tagore, "that Man should persist in his foolhardiness, in spite of the penalty he pays for opposing the orthodox rule of animal locomotion. He reduces by half the easy balance of his muscles. He is ready to pass his infancy tottering through perilous experiments in making progress upon insufficient support, and followed all through his life by liability to sudden downfalls resulting in tragic or ludicrous consequences from which law-abiding quadrupeds are free. This was his great venture, his relinquishment of a secure position of his limbs, which he would comfortably have retained in return for humbly salaaming the all-powerful dust at every step" ( *Religion of Man*, pp. 52-53 ).

Similarly, reason also is a faculty with which man is endowed, and the employment of it not only has helped him in his evolution, but very often the

conditions have been such as to render it almost indispensable. If intuition in man had been perfectly steady, instead of being of the flashy character that it is, it might have been possible to dispense with reason. But unfortunately, it is never so. Human intuitions are fragmentary and flashy, and therefore they require to be supplemented by reason, for in man, constituted as he at present is, it is only reason that can supply the necessary basis for systematized knowledge. As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, ( Vide *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, p. 103 ), "intuition by the very nature of its action in man, working as it does from behind the veil, in the narrow light which is our waking consciousness, only by instruments that are unable fully to assimilate its message—intuition is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which nature demands." It is here that the help of reason is indispensable. Sri Aurobindo further says that this explains why in the history of human culture an intuitive age has generally been followed by an age of reason. For example, in our country the great intuitive age of the Upanishads was followed by an age of philosophy, of rational interpretation of experience.

It is quite in keeping with the author's faith in authority and tradition that he regards the Middle Ages in Europe as a most glorious epoch. He is very sorry and extremely surprised that mediaeval civilization was quickly forgotten. Already in the seventeenth century, he says, "men had not the slightest idea of what it had been, and the movements that survived from it no longer stood for anything in their eyes, intellectually or even aesthetically" ( p. 24 ). Does it never strike him that there must have been very cogent reasons for this? Why is it that civilizations which are much older are still remembered, while that of the Middle Ages is completely forgotten? If the Middle Ages had really been as glorious as he thinks, would this have been possible?

His faith in Papacy and his condemnation of Protestantism follow as a deduction from his fondness for the Middle Ages. In no other way can we understand the following statement: "Protestantism, like the modern world, is built upon mere negation, the same negation of principles which is the very essence of individualism; and one can see in it one more example, and a most striking one, of anarchy and dissolution that has arisen from this negation" ( p. 38 ). There can be no doubt that the world owes a great deal to Protestantism which by its criticism of some of the forms which had crept into religion, paved the way for a reorientation of religious thought. Such periodical revision and reorientation is extremely necessary if religion is to retain its vigour. In our country also the impact of Buddhism and Jainism upon the traditional religion was on the whole very healthy, for



without it there was great danger of stagnation. And what shall we say of the impact of the West? Has it been an unmixed evil? Certainly not. As the lifework of Raja Rammohan Roy so amply proves, it has led to a revitalization of traditional religion which, but for it, would never have been possible.

We should not, however, dwell too long upon the shortcomings of the book, lest we forget its merits which, as we have already said, are really great. There can be no doubt that it has given a true diagnosis of the malady of the modern world. And this diagnosis agrees also in all essentials with that of Tagore. As we all know, Tagore in his plays *The Waterfall* and *The Red Oleanders* has given us a graphic picture of the havoc which modern civilization has done and is still doing in reducing man to a mere machine. As he has put it, Jack must be saved from being crushed by the Giant, which is only another name for the soulless mechanical civilization of the present day.

The only hope of the world lies—I would not say in going back to the traditional outlook, for that is neither possible nor desirable, but—in adapting that traditional outlook to the requirements of a growing and changing world, so as to give intuition and faith their due place, without, of course, discarding reason. This would give the world a chance to know its soul which, as Sri Aurobindo regrets, it lacks at present.

S. K. Maitra

### *LAND AND ITS PROBLEMS— Vol. 1.*

*By* Dr. Sudhir Sen, B. Sc. ( Econ. ) Ph. D.

( Visva-Bharati Economic Research Publication No. 3 )

THE recent controversy over the food question has made it clear that agricultural statistics in this country are very unsatisfactory. The method that is adopted for the collection of data is so haphazard that no reliance can be placed on the figures published by the authorities. And yet before any attempt is made to ameliorate the condition of the rural people correct informations relating to their economic condition should be available. It is precisely because of this that the publication of 'Land And Its Problems' by the Visva-Bharati Economic Research Board is so welcome. This gives the results of a regional study carried on during the last three or four years. Fif-

teen villages were selected in the neighbourhood of Sriniketan—Visva-Bharati Institute of Rural Reconstruction, and 1,731 families were studied. The number of families about which informations were collected, may be considered to be quite large and although the villages selected were not distributed over the district yet one may safely say that conclusions drawn from this study will equally apply to the district of Birbhum, if not to the major portion of Western Bengal. The rural economic problems over the whole of Bengal are similar in spite of the local variations in soil fertility, rainfall, pressure of population etc., and the detailed study of a particular region gives one an insight into the conditions prevailing in other parts of the province.

The book has been divided into four sections. The first section deals with general topics. There is a discussion of the importance of regional studies and agricultural statistics. The physical characteristics of the district of Birbhum are described in some detail. The pressure of population in the area covered by the survey was 500 per square mile and there were 70 acres of arable land per 100 of population. There is one interesting chapter devoted to the size of holdings. Figures are given to show that the majority of the holdings are very small and that land is concentrated in the hands of a few well-to-do persons. "The figures throw into bold relief" says the author "the over-whelming preponderance of small holdings. Thus about a fourth of the total cultivating families have five bighas or less each and together they own hardly one twenty-fifth of the entire cultivated area ; about 57 per cent own 15 bighas or less each and together account for slightly over a fifth of the total area. At the other end we have 5.2 per cent families owing no less than 23.2 per cent, of which, again, 1.2 per cent or 9 families together own 8.2 per cent of the land. Thus one twentieth of the families with holding above 20 acres own more land than about three-fifths of the families with holdings of 3 acres or less." It is further added "that of the 1,731 families living within our area only 814 or 46 per cent owned land in some form or other."

The paddy is the main crop in the area under survey, the actual average acreage being 14,477 acres out of total cultivated area of 15,005 acres. The cultural practices in paddy cultivation are described in great detail. Figures are given of the costs of production. The yields are shewn to be very low as compared not only to yields in other countries but also to other districts within the province. The factors responsible for such low yields are brought out. It seems that the lowest limit of fertility has been reached. Manuring is hardly done, facilities for irrigation are very inadequate and the crop has to depend entirely on the monsoon.

The methods by which the yields can be increased are suggested. A more liberal use of farm yard manure instead of using it as fuel, use of artificial farm yard manure prepared by the Indore process, utilization of nightsoil as poudrette, green manuring with leguminous crops and use of improved varieties etc. have been mentioned.

There is a great deal of fresh material relating to rural economics and one cannot but be grateful for the mass of data which have been so laboriously and skilfully collected. The suggestions for improvement have also been thoughtfully made but one wonders how far they can be taken up by the agriculturists. At the outset the author begins by making it clear "that the immediate object of these studies is to explore the possibilities of raising the standard of living of the rural population within the framework of the present social and economic structure." It is this limitation that makes the work lose so much of its value. The standard of living cannot be very well raised if the present socio-economic structure is left as it is. Even the Floud Commission which cannot be accused of being a body consisting of men with radical views, saw the necessity of a change in the land system by means of abolition of the Permanent Settlement and state acquisition of land interests. The improvements suggested cannot be applied, except to a limited extent, unless the whole economic structure is altered. Where the holdings are so small and where the majority live on the verge of starvation scientific improvements cannot be expected to be taken up in the same way as in a country where the farms are large and the farmers relatively prosperous. Scientific and improved methods can only be effectively employed in the large farms and the obvious remedy, though not an easy one, is to take measures which will lead to the establishment of big compact holdings in place of the small ones.

The present book is the first of a series that is being published by the Visva-Bharati and we look forward to the publication of further volumes which will be extremely useful to the students of rural economics.

Santipriya Bose

*THE PHILOSOPHY OF VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA :*

P. N. Srinivasachari.

The Adyar Library Series. No. 39. Price Rs. 10/-.

THE philosophy of Rāmānuja is a curious combination of dogmatic religion and acute logical analysis. The student of Śrībhāṣya is thus legitimately lost in the long and numerous quotations from the Scriptures on the one hand and the baffling maze of argumentations on the other. There is then his love for ornamental Sanskrit and the manner of imagining the opponent's opponent, refuting him in favour of the opponent and refuting the opponent in favour of himself. Other difficulties in reading the text of Rāmānuja may perhaps be mentioned. The traditional *tole*-teaching is waning and the literal translation of the text ( I mean that of Thibaut, with which I am acquainted and which is obscure where literal ) do not help much. One therefore feels enthusiastic over the publication of the volume of Sj. Srinivasachari. Such an exhaustive exposition of the philosophy of Rāmānuja, systematically arranged and lucidly written, is obviously of immense help to the student of Indian Philosophy. The different aspects of Śariravāda—one can see that all the aspects of this system— theology, epistemology, ethics, psychology and so on, are lucidly expounded, clearly set forth, without any substantial sacrifice of details in favour of apparent simplicity. Certain stray suggestions of Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy are coherently worked out by the author : discussion of the theory of Judgment and the chapter on Aesthetics may be mentioned as examples. Two chapters—viz. XX & XXI—are devoted to historical treatment. They give us the history of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vaiṣṇavism as well as the influence of Rāmānuja on other systems of Indian Philosophy. And here, within a few pages, one gets informations which can otherwise be acquired by an intimate acquaintance with a very wide range of Indian speculation. More points can surely be mentioned in favour of the book. It is superb in so far as it is expository.

The difficulty begins where the author enters the realm of interpretation. There we have to deal with the attitude of the author which is religious rather than philosophical. To rationalize Rāmānuja—that is his supreme interest ; he wants to rationalize Rāmānuja, moreover, because of a religious devotion for him. The author proposes to be critical, but the "ethical inspiration" ( Russell ) is more easily evidenced. It is announced that the book "was placed at the feet of Śrī Rāmānuja at the shrine dedicated to Him in His birthplace" ( one cannot fail to notice the "H"s in capital )—and still it is claimed in the preface that "the main purpose of this work is to give a *critical* and comprehensive exposition of the central features of

Viśiṣṭādvaita and its relation to other schools of Vedānta". 'Critical' in the above quotation sounds incongruous. The scholarship of S. Srinivasachari is surely scattered all over the 642 pages; his grasp of the central features of Rāmānuja is clear; his power of systematisation is obvious. But then, he starts with the idea of proving that the Viśiṣṭādvaitic philosophy is capable of satisfying the demands of science and philosophy on the one hand and of ethics and religion on the other. This claim, it need not be said, is neither valid, nor could it possibly be substantiated. The author has attempted to prove his assumption at the end of each chapter, but the effort itself has led him away from his scholarly detachment and made him a captive of his own fixed ideas. He seems to have ignored the fact that responsible thinkers in the East and West hold contrary views. He hardly mentions them at all—not to speak of doing justice to their representations. The concluding chapter is full of over-simplifications and generalizations which minimises the scholarly claims of the book.

I should try to prove my case. It is better perhaps to take the instance of Śaṅkara, rather than any Western Philosopher.

Being identified with the narrowly religious approach to the problems of philosophy, S. Srinivasachari makes light of the logical issues. Criticisms levelled against Śaṅkara, the great rival of Rāmānuja, are accepted by the author without much logical analysis or examination. Advaita has been criticised by the school of Bhāskara; Rāmānuja criticises the Bhāskara-school; and so Rāmānuja is final. Or, again, Dhyānaniogyavāda refutes Śaṅkara, Bhāskara refutes the former, Rāmānuja refutes Bhāskara and so Rāmānuja comes out triumphant. And so on. There is some confusion made here between history and philosophy. Chronological sequence is not enough to establish logical validity. The intrinsic logical worth of Bhāskara over Śaṅkara—whether it is really there or not—is surely to be enquired into. It is a simple point, but unfortunately the fixed religious approach is oblivious even of this.

The logical basis of Śaṅkara is as simple as his literary style. He is moreover as consistent as he is graceful. He starts with the law of contradiction as the criterion of ultimate reality and finds that the world is full of contradiction and naturally rejects it as unreal. He does not offer any difficult dialectic like Zeno, Bradley or Nāgārjuna to exhibit contradictions in this world; it is a curious mixture of the Ego and the Non-Ego. The causal relation, so fundamental in the world, shows that factually the effect *must be* a new beginning but logically it *cannot be* one. We are generally inclined to believe it to be real on the strength of our ordinary waking experience. But then this experience has no ultimate worth as it is successive-

ly negated by the different dimensions of our awareness — *svapna*, *susupti* and *turiya*. Is the world, then, a hollow abstraction? Perhaps not; for an empty abstraction like the son of a barren woman is never positively perceived. It is then neither real nor unreal, — somewhat like the snake you wrongly perceive in a rope, — we should rather call it indescribable. These arguments lead to a dangerous consequence: it makes practice — in whatever form it may be, religious, ethical or economic — meaningless in the standard of the ultimate truth. But Śaṅkara is not afraid of such a consequence: he would make absolutely no compromise and thus sharply distinguishes between the practical and the speculative order. Rāmānuja felt a distaste for these arguments, for he had the typical Indian mind immersed in the Vedas with all the rituals. A system which declares practice to be meaningless has got to be refuted. There is surely no objection to such a reaction, provided it is carried out consistently. But Rāmānuja really misses the mark. He goes on attacking Śaṅkara at random, often vulgarises Śaṅkara and offers easy caricature. ( I have unfortunately no space to illustrate this in detail. ) But the real strength of Śaṅkara, his clinging to the law of contradiction, is hardly ever challenged. Śaṅkara stands or falls with it. More side-attacks may prolong the controversy but cannot bring any conclusion. To save the reality of the external world and the relevance of practice, one has to start with a new logic, the logic of synthesis. Contradiction can be, and in fact are continually reconciled in reality: that is what has to be proved. Far from realising this, Rāmānuja rejects the very suggestion of it offered by the Jainas. His random attacks on Śaṅkara do not therefore mean very much.

I have spoken of the logical basis of the two philosophers in a general manner. It may fail to convince the reader. But the space we have here is strictly limited. Besides, I have but given one illustration. The point of the present criticism is that the author in spite of his scholarship, has a bias for the religious approach to philosophy, he is indifferent to the logical issue. An illustration has been given of what to mean by the real logical issue.

The writer, and therefore the reader, of any book on Ancient Indian Culture has to traverse a slender path with dangers on both sides. On the one hand there is the tendency to represent whatever is Indian and whatever is ancient as final. As if, final and completely satisfactory solutions of the great problems of mankind were revealed to our forefathers alone. We are familiar with the claim that whatever is sane in contemporary science was apparent to our forefathers. In the realm of the concrete and the empirical, however, this is continually challenged and, very often, disproved.

But philosophy, even after Kant, often loves the free flight of imagination and looks at the empirical with contempt. Thus most Indian writers on philosophy still start with the idea of rationalising the past systems. This is unfortunate, for it is not philosophical even in the standard of our old masters. They repeatedly told us that detachment is the first essential condition of philosophising.

The danger on the other side can be described thus : Whatever is past is dead. This is the attitude of some modernist critics. To relegate the past to oblivion is the prime of motive of such critics. They try to live in the present which is merely present. And this is absurd. For tradition is too important a factor in the cultural life of nation. Here, more than elsewhere, 'the past lives in the present and gnaws into the future.' Culture, which tries to negate the tradition is but an aberration.

So neither the blind worship of the past nor ignoring the past as dead and therefore dumb, would, we should claim, betray to the true scholarly mind. Mr. Srinivasachari, unfortunately, does not satisfy this double demand. In spite of his scholarship, his grasp of the central features of Rāmānuja, his power of systematisation and his lucid style, one has, therefore, to accept his book with some hesitation.

Debiprosad Chattopadhyaya.







## THE ROOM

*By Rabindranath Tagore.*

SCATTERED in this room  
Dumb, deaf Things, lie together or separate :  
Some of them strike my eyes, others escape through  
inattention.

Carrying the brass flower vase  
The teapoy hides its face in a corner ;  
The articles in the cabinet, a miscellaneous crowd  
Are almost as if they did not exist.  
Two broken window-panes lie there behind the screen's  
covering ;

To-day, suddenly, it seems that the red screen itself  
I see and also do not ;

On the rug is drawn an intricate design .  
By the morning light, at seven o'clock.

A green cloth  
Covers the desk ; some day I had fancied it,  
Its colour had flamed in my eyes  
To-day, the fiery green lies buried as if under ashes,  
It is there but not one hundred per cent.

In the drawers, layer upon layer,  
Are heaped up papers of all sorts ;  
Most of them I forget to throw away,  
What use they may have I do not know.  
On the table slants a calendar,  
It strikes me that it is the eighth of the month.  
A bottle of lavender catches the colour of the light.  
The clock ticks, hardly I look at it.  
Near the wall  
An almirah stands, full of books,  
Most of them remain unknown waiting for recognition.  
Those pictures which I hung on the walls  
Appear like ghosts, being forgotten.  
The lines on the carpet  
Once spoke in clear language,  
Now they are almost silent.  
The days gone before, and this particular day  
Lie here and there together but without relationship.  
In this small room  
Some of the things are intimate, many are alien.  
So, in going past the table  
With shut-eyed habit I move,  
Most of it I do not see clearly at all.  
Between the known and the unknown is a thin bridge of  
awareness,  
Which I cross and recross, inattentively.  
Under the mirror-frame a photograph of childhood days  
Some one has placed, the print has gone faint  
The picture and shadows lie together.  
In my mind I wonder, I am that Rabindranath  
Composed of clear and obscure ingredients  
Like this room.

In dim, old, torn language  
Things throng indifferently,  
Some in front, some hidden away in corners.  
Much that I had to discard, I forgot to remove,  
Heaped up they have gradually lost their meaning.  
Slowly the past days  
Forget themselves, rub off their right of existence,  
Shadows, they are lost amidst the new.  
The alphabet in which they send their writing to the  
present  
Nobody can read.

11. 9. 38.

## THE BACKGROUND

*By* Rabindranath Tagore

To paint memories by giving them form,  
And gather together in language those signs which are limned in  
consciousness,

—I wonder what it all means.

This is life's childlike play, this demand,  
In foolish delight feigning to defeat oblivion  
And win in the game of life-and-death :  
By invoking a galaxy of illusions and images.

In the current of time, the forms of things wear away and scatter,  
Life creates out of them a second form with shadows put  
together ;

If death contradicts, it hears not.

Bound in fleeting existence I dwell,

My imagined forms, shaped in creation, spread across time  
and space :—

This I do not myself know, but when the end comes,  
If others know then in them I live.

16.3.39.

# THE OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE IN ELIOT

By PARITOSH BANERJEE

EVEN as early as in his *The Love Song of J.A. Prufrock* Eliot starts not with metaphor but with symbolism. A metaphor is directly emotional and lyrical ; it is the product of an imagination aquiver with the passion of its vision and seizing upon something other than that vision and invading it and penetrating it with the quality of that vision. A metaphor, in short, is the spontaneous flowering of the integral imagination. But when Prufrock says :

I have measured out my life with coffee-spoons.

we have something different from a metaphor. Prufrock's awareness of the barrenness of his social life does not overtly reverberate through the line. It is expressed with the help of an image that suggests, or perhaps insinuates, that a certain quality underlies the act of measuring life with coffee-spoons. The image is not a metaphor but a symbol.

It is obvious that while in a metaphor the intellect has no separate function, but is subsumed by emotion, it is rather otherwise in symbolism. The sudden swift leaping out of the heart's passion that can remould the face of the world has here been checked, intellect has more come into its own. The difference is still further heightened in Eliot because he is the sophisticated modern poet consciously seeking an artistic effect. From no world of faerie lying open to magic casements does he draw his symbol but from the very mundane life around him. A still more important point of departure for the study of Eliot's symbolism is suggested in :

And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat,  
and snicker.

Here the symbol becomes dramatic. Prufrock's rankling sense of frustration is suggested by his reaction to that social appendage,

the Footman. The two are set in implicit contrast—which is dramatic.

Here then we have the seeds of what afterwards came to fruition as the 'objective correlative', whereby the poet is able to lift his vision out of the constriction of personality and give it a shape that will be impersonal and dramatic. One can watch Eliot slowly feeling his way to a complete understanding of the objective correlative.

The extension of the symbol so as to cover a dramatic purpose is most clearly revealed, so far as Prufrock is concerned, in :

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each  
I do not think that they will sing to me,

The mermaids are the symbol of beauty and this symbol is set by Prufrock in conscious opposition to himself, and thereby suggests that his vision of beauty, of fulfilment, of love confessed and realised, will for ever hover beyond realisation. In *Aunt Helen* the technique is still more subtly used. He satirises her, but the satire is cast into the form of an objective correlative and thereby becomes all the more devastating. The personality of Aunt Helen, her way of life are annihilated, not by the poet's personal comment, but by the picture of the Footman who sat upon the table in the dining room with the second housemaid, who had been so careful while her mistress lived, on his knee. Here is modification of something disparate by a predominant passion, as in a metaphor ; on the other hand it is the function of the disparate experience to remain as such, and, by so doing, to throw up in a dry light a certain quality in the first observation of the poet. In *Cousin Nancy*, on the other hand, it is the first observation that is used to pulverise by ridicule the disparate experience and all that it stands for. Miss Nancy Ellicott does all that a girl should not do, and on the glazen shelves Matthew and Waldo keep watch, the vanguard of "the army of unalterable law."

In these poems, then, Eliot's first observation has its quality indirectly suggested by the presentation in spatial adjacency and

deeper psychological antithesis of a separate observation which may be said to be touched with symbolism in as much as it suggests something wider than itself. Here then we have the objective correlative raised, dramatically, to the second power. Not merely is the poet's intuition given an objective garb, but it evolves through the juxtaposition of hostile terms. Such a device results when the sense of conflict in life, which Eliot has stressed again and again as one of the essential characteristics of the poet, is deliberately pushed to its logical extreme.

In his later metaphysical poems the objective correlative changes its character, becomes less dramatic. It still is an extended symbol, in fact is more truly so, is still stated in terms of "objects in the external world", but significantly enough, no longer expressed in terms "of events in human action." Thereby the sense of conflict, which retains its dramatic quality only when presented, concretely, through the interaction of human agencies, disappears out of his poetry. There is conflict, but in purely metaphysical sense. Consider, for example, the first stanza of *Little Gidding*. The picture at once suggests that :

the intersection of the timeless moment  
is England and nowhere. Never and always.

There is the *East Coker* too, his greatest work, with its splendid use of the sea as an objective correlative.

But often enough the lack of an adequate symbolism makes itself felt in Eliot's metaphysical poetry. There are two reasons why it should be so. Eliot's idea of the objective correlative has changed. Instead of being a mere literary device, an external pattern into which to throw one's personal intuitions it has become for Eliot a totality of vision of Time and the Timeless, of the moment and eternity. But it is still far from being a vision that has been realised in life, founded in action. The tenuity of Eliot's metaphysical vision is thus answerable for that straining in the literary use of the objective correlative which is noticeable in his later poetry. And, besides, there is that force



at work which even in his earliest poetry leads him from the metaphor to the symbol. It is the spirit of the age, with its gift of self-consciousness, and the consequent inability of the conscious mind to surrender to the heart. Not for the modern poet the positive ecstasy of self-abandon. The sophisticated modern poet is barred by virtue of his self-consciousness from that supreme act whereby man loses himself in order to find himself. It is this fundamental weakness that accounts for the frequent coldness of Eliot's philosophical poetry, for not until the symbol has passed through the leaping fire of passion does it suffer a seachange into something rich and strange.



## BLAISE PASCAL

(1623-1662)

*By* NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

“THE zeal for the Lord hath eaten me up.” Such has indeed been the case with Pascal, almost literally. The fire that burned in him was too ardent and vehement for the vehicle, the material instrument, which was very soon used up and reduced to ashes. At twenty-four he was already a broken man, being struck with paralysis and neurasthenia ; he died at the comparatively early age of 39, emulating, as it were, the life career of his Lord the Christ who died at 33. The Fire martyred the body, but kindled and brought forth experiences and realisations that save and truths that abide. It was the Divine Fire whose vision and experience he had on the famous night of Nov. 23, 1654 which brought about his final and definitive conversion. It was the same fire that had blazed up in his brain, while yet a boy, and made him a precocious genius, a marvel of intellectual power in the exact sciences. At 12 this prodigy discovered by himself the 32nd proposition of Euclid Book I. At 16 he wrote a treatise on conic sections. At 19 he invented a calculating machine which, without the help of any mathematical rule or process, gave absolutely accurate results. At 23 he published his experiments with vacuum. At 25 he conducted the well-known experiment from the tower of St. Jacques proving the existence of atmospheric pressure. His studies in infinitesimal calculus were remarkably creative and original. And it might be said he was a pioneer in quite a new branch of mathematics, viz. the mathematical theory of probability. We shall see presently how his preoccupation with the mathematics of chance and probability coloured and reinforced his metaphysics and theology.

But the pressure upon his dynamic and heated brain—the fiery zeal in his mind—was already proving too much and he was advised medically to take complete rest. Thereupon followed what was known as Pascal's mundane life—a period of distraction and dissipation ; but this did not last long nor was it of a serious nature. The inner fire could brook no delay, it was eager and impatient to englobe other fields and domains. Indeed it turned to its own field—the heart. Pascal became initiated into the mystery of Faith and Grace. Still he had to pass through a terrible period of dejection and despair : the life of the world had given him no rest or relaxation, it served only to fill his cup of misery to the brim. But the hour of final relief was not long postponed : the Grace came to him, even as it came to Moses or St. Paul as a sudden flare of fire which burnt up the Dark Night and opened out the portals of Morning Glory.

Pascal's place in the evolution of European culture and consciousness is of considerable significance and importance. He came at a critical time, on the mounting tide of rationalism and scepticism, in an age when the tone and temper of human mentality were influenced and fashioned by Montaigne and Rochefoucauld, by Bacon and Hobbes. Pascal himself, born in such an atmosphere of doubt and disbelief and disillusionment, had sucked in a full dose of that poison ; yet he survived and found the Rock of Ages, became the clarion of Faith against Denial. What a spectacle it was ! This is what one wrote just a quarter of a century after the death of Pascal :

“They can no longer tell us that it is only small minds that have piety. They are shown how it has grown best in one of the greatest geometers, one of the subtlest metaphysicians, one of the most penetrating minds that ever existed on earth. The piety of such a philosopher should make the unbeliever and the libertine declare what a certain Diocles said one day on seeing Epicurus in a temple : What a feast, what a spectacle for me to see Epicurus in a temple ! All my doubts vanish, piety takes

its place again. I never saw Jupiter's greatness so well as now when I behold Epicurus kneeling down !"<sup>1</sup>

What characterises Pascal is the way in which he has bent his brain—not rejected it—but truly bent and forced even the dry “geometrical brain” to the service of Faith.

In his enquiry into truth and certitude Pascal takes his stand upon what he calls the geometrical method, the only valid method, according to him, in the sphere of reason. The characteristic of this method is that it takes for granted certain fundamental principles and realities—called axioms and postulates or definitions—and proceeds to other truths that are infallibly and inevitably deduced from them, that are inherent and implied in them. There is no use or necessity in trying to demonstrate these fundamentals also ; that will only land us into confusion and muddle. They have to be simply accepted, they do not require demonstration, it is they that demonstrate others. Such, for instance, are space, time, number, the reality of which it is foolishness and pedantry to seek to prove. There is then an order of truths that do not require to be proved. We are referring only to the order of physical truths. But there is another order, Pascal says, equally valid and veritable, the order of the spirit. Here we have another set of fundamentals that have to be accepted and taken for granted, matrix of other truths and realities. It can also be called the order of the Heart. Reason posits physical fundamentals ; it does not know of the fundamentals of the Heart which are beyond its reach ; such are God, Soul, Immortality which are evident only to Faith.

1. “Ils ne peuvent plus nous dire qu'il n'y a que de petits esprits qui aient de la piété : car on leur en fait voir de la mieux poussée dans l'un des plus grands géomètres, l'un des plus subtils metaphysiciens, et des plus pénétrants esprits que aient jamais été au monde. La piété d'un tel philosophe devrait faire dire aux indévots et aux libertins ce que dit un jour un certain Dioctés, en voyant Epicure dans un temple : ‘Quelle fête, s'écriait-il, quelle spectacle pour moi, de voir Epicure dans un temple ! Tous mes soupçons s'évanouissent : la piété reprend sa place ; et je ne vis jamais mieux la grandeur de Jupiter que depuis que je vois Epicure à genoux !’”

But Faith and Reason, according to Pascal, are not contraries nor irreconcilables. Because the things of faith are beyond reason, it is not that they are irrational. Here is what Pascal says about the function and limitation of reason :

"The last movement of reason is to know that there is an infinity of things that are beyond it. It must be a very weak reason if it does not arrive there."<sup>1</sup>

"One must know where one should doubt, where one should submit."<sup>2</sup>

"Two excesses are equally dangerous : to exclude reason, to admit nothing but reason."<sup>3</sup>

He goes farther and adopting a positive attitude says :

"We know truth not by reason alone, but by the heart also : it is in the latter way that we know the first principles, and in vain does reasoning, that has no part in it, attempt to combat them. . . . The heart feels . . . and the reason demonstrates afterwards . . . Principles are felt, propositions are deduced."<sup>4</sup>

About doubt, Pascal says that the perfect doubter, the Pyrrhonian as he is called, is a fiction. Pascal asks :

"What will men do in such a state ? Will he doubt everything ? Will he doubt whether he doubts ? Will he doubt whether he exists ? . . . In fact there has never been a perfectly effective Pyrrhonian"<sup>5</sup>

The process of conversion of the doubting mind, of the dry intellectual reason as propounded and perhaps practised by Pascal is also a characteristic mark of his nature and genius. It

1. La dernière démarche de la raison, c'est de connaître qu'il y a une infinité de choses qui la surpassent. Elle est bien faible si elle ne va jusque-là".

2. "Il faut savoir douter où il faut, assurer où il faut, se soumettre où il faut".

3. "Ce sont deux excès également dangereux, d'exclure la raison, de n'admettre que la raison".

4. "Nous connaissons la vérité, non seulement par la raison, mais encore par le cœur ; c'est de cette dernière sorte que nous connaissons les premiers principes, et c'est en vain que le raisonnement qui n'y a point de part, essaye de les combattre . . . . Le cœur sent . . . et la raison démontre ensuite . . . Les principes se sentent, les propositions se concluent.

5. "Que fera donc l'homme en cet état ? Doutera-t-il de tout ? doutera-t-il s'il veille si on le pince, si on le brûle ? doutera-t-il s'il doute ? doutera-t-il s'il est ? . . . On ne peut venir là : et je mets en fait qu'il n'y a jamais eu de pyrrhonien effectif parfait."

is explained in his famous letter on "bet" or "game of chance" (*Le Pari*). Here is how he puts the issue to the doubting mind ( I am giving the substance, not his words ) : let us say then that in the world we are playing a game of chance. How do the chances stand ? What are the gains and losses if God does not exist ? What are the gains and losses if God does exist ? If God exists, by accepting and reaching him what do we gain ? All that man cares for—happiness, felicity. And what do we lose ? We lose the world of misery. If on the other hand God does not exist, by believing him to exist, we lose nothing, we are not more miserable than what we are. If however God exists and we do not believe him, we gain this world of misery but we lose all that is worth having. Thus Pascal concludes even from the standpoint of mere gain and loss, belief in God is more advantageous than unbelief. This is how he applied to metaphysics the mathematics of probability.

One is not sure if such reasoning is convincing to the intellect ; but perhaps it is a necessary stage in conversion. At least we can conclude that Pascal had to pass through such a stage ; and it indicates the difficulty his brain had to undergo, the tension or even the torture he made it pass through. It is true, from Reason Pascal went over to Faith even while giving Reason its due. Still it seems the two were not perfectly synthetised or fused in him. There was a gap between that was not thoroughly bridged. Pascal did not possess the higher, intuitive, luminous mind that mediates successfully between the physical discursive ratiocinative brain-mind and the vision of faith : it is because deep in his consciousness there lay this chasm. Indeed *Pascal's abyss* (*l'abîme de Pascal*) is a well-known legend. Pascal it appears, used to have very often the vision of an abyss about to open before him and he shuddered at the prospect of falling into it. It seems to us to be an experience of the Infinity—the infinity to which he was so much attracted and of which he wrote so beautifully ( "L'infiniment grand et l'infiniment petit" )—but into which he could

not evidently jump overboard unreservedly. This produced a dichotomy, a lack of integration of personality, Jung would say. Pascal's brain was cold, firm, almost rigid ; his heart was volcanic, the faith he had was a fire : it lacked something of the pure light and burned with a lurid glare.

And the reason is his metaphysics. It is the Jansenist conception of God and human nature that inspired and coloured all his experience and consciousness. According to it, as according to the Calvinist conception, man is a corrupt being, corroded to the core, original sin has branded his very soul. Only Grace saves him and releases him. The order of sin and the order of Grace are distinct and disparate worlds and yet they complement each other and need each other. Greatness and misery are intertwined, united, unified with each other in him. Here is an echo of the Manichean position which also involves an abyss. But even then God's grace is not a free agent, as Jesuits declare ; there is a predestination that guides and controls it. This was one of the main subjects he treated in his famous open letters ( *Les Provinciales* ) that brought him renown almost overnight. Eternal hell is a possible prospect that faces the Jansenist. That was why a Night always overshadowed the Day in Pascal's soul.

Man then, according to Pascal, is by nature a sinful thing. He can lay no claim to noble virtue as his own : all in him is vile, he is a lump of dirt and filth. Even the greatest has his full share of this taint. The greatest, the saintliest, and the meanest, the most sinful, all meet, all are equal on this common platform ; all have the same feet of clay. Man is as miserable a creature as a beast, as much a part and product of nature as a plant. Only there is this difference that an animal or a tree is unconscious, while man knows that he is miserable. This knowledge or perception makes him more miserable, but that is his real and only greatness—there is no other. His thought, his self-consciousness, and his sorrow and repentance and contrition for what he is—that is the only good part—Mary's part—that

has been given to him. Here are Pascal's own words on the subject :

"The greatness of man is great in this that he knows he is miserable. A tree does not know that it is miserable.

It is misery indeed to know oneself miserable. But one is great when one knows thus that he is miserable.

Thought is man's greatness.

Man is a mere reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed."<sup>1</sup>

Pascal's faith had not the calm, tranquil, serene, luminous and happy self-possession of an Indian Rishi. It was ardent and impatient, fiery and vehement. It had to be so perhaps, since it was to stand against his steely brain ( and a gloomy vital or life force ) as a counterpoise, even as an antidote. This tension and schism brought about, at least contributed to his neurasthenia and physical infirmity. But whatever the effect upon his inner consciousness and spiritual achievement, his power of expression, his literary style acquired by that a special quality which is his great gift to the French language. If one speaks of Pascal, one has to speak of his language also ; for he was one of the great masters who created the French prose. His prose was a wonderful blend of clarity, precision, serried logic and warmth, colour, life, movement, plasticity.

A translation cannot give any idea of the Pascalian style ; but an inner echo of the same can perhaps be caught from the thought movement of these characteristic sayings of his with which we conclude :

"Contradiction is not a mark of falsehood, nor 'is uncontradiction a mark of truth."<sup>2</sup>

1. La grandeur de l'homme est grande en ce qu'il se connaît misérable.  
Un arbre ne se connaît pas misérable.

C'est donc être misérable que de se connaître misérable. Mais c'est être grand que de connaître qu'on est misérable.

Pensée fait la grandeur de l'homme.

• L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant.

2. "Ni la contradiction n'est marque de fausseté, ni l'incontradiction n'est marque de vérité."



"The infinite distance of the body from the mind images the distance infinitely more infinite of the mind from Charity ( Divine Grace, Faith ).<sup>1</sup>

"The heart has its reasons which Reason knows not.... I say, the heart loves the universal being naturally, and itself also naturally, according to whichever it gives itself. And it hardens itself against the one or the other according to its choice. You have rejected one and preserved the other. Is it by the reason that you love ?"<sup>2</sup>

"Know then, O you proud one, what a paradox you are to yourself. Humble yourself, impotent Reason. Learn, man surpasses man infinitely. Hear from your Master your true state which you do not know. Listen to God."<sup>3</sup>

1. "La distance infinie des corps aux esprits figure la distance infiniment plus infinie des esprits à la charité."

2. "Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point ; on le sait en mille choses. Je dis que le coeur aime l'être universel naturellement, et soi-même naturellement, selon qu'il s'y donne ; et il se durcit contre l'un ou l'autre, à son choix. Vous avez rejeté l'un et conservé l'autre. Est-ce par raison que vous aimez ?"

3. "Connaissez donc, superbe, quel paradoxe vous êtes à vous-même. Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante : apprenez que l'homme passe infiniment l'homme, et entendez de votre maître votre condition véritable que vous ignorez. Ecoutez Dieu."

# IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN EGO

By K. A. HAMID

IQBAL's doctrine of *khudi* or 'egohood' is very well-known, but his view of the human ego as a creative agent has not received the attention it deserves. I propose to discuss it very briefly in this paper. I shall first recapitulate very briefly his doctrine of *khudi* because it is indispensable to the proper understanding of this subject.

Iqbal believes that Reality is a process of becoming. It is not something made and static, i. e. incapable of change and development. It is in a kind of never-ceasing flux with this difference that whereas for Heraclitus and those who have thought like him in later ages, this flux is more or less aimless and perhaps mechanically determined and mechanically explainable, for Iqbal it is ego-determined and ego-inspired. Purposes are at work within the flux. There are finite purposes when the determining egos are finite but there is also a Supreme Purpose of which the Arch-Ego is the author. This Arch-Ego is the inspirer of the dynamism of the flux and the ever-active guide of its course.

Each ego is an individual. It is a "finite centre of experience" and "the fundamental fact of the universe." "All life is individual : there is no such thing as universal life. God himself is an individual. He is the most unique individual". Iqbal's universe is, therefore, an association of individuals headed by the most unique individual—God. But these individuals are not so many Leibnitzian monads, for the monads are 'windowless' and self-centred. The egos of Iqbal's universe are not windowless and they are not closed systems. They interact and influence one another, they grow and decay, they inspire and depress one another, and above all, they are recipients of influence from the Arch-Ego who is the divine author of their being. For egos of a lower order this influence is a sort of infusing, a more or less

unconscious reception of grace from God, but the development of the finite ego consists in this that he should be actively able to absorb, as much of this grace as he can. "The perfect man," says Iqbal, "not only absorbs the world of matter by mastering it ; he absorbs God himself into his ego by assimilating Divine Attributes." For such a man the ideal is to "capture Deity in his net," as Iqbal graphically puts it. It is for this reason that he frequently quotes with approval the claim of the famous Sufi Mansur Hallaj : "*I am the creative Truth.*"

Before we proceed any further it would be profitable to know what in Iqbal's view is the distinctive characteristic of the human ego. The creativity of such an ego can only be understood and should only be explained in terms of its native characteristics. First and foremost, then, the human ego is a unique and spiritual centre of consciousness. Even the world of matter has a spiritual origin with potentialities of the ego in it, for its author is the Supreme Spirit—God. All that comes into being must bear the impress of its origin. Between the human ego and his environment which is 'the world of matter,' so called, there is therefore a community of origin, an affinity. It is this affinity which enables man to understand and interact with his environment, for had the environment been completely alien in nature, neither understanding nor interaction would have been possible. The problem of knowledge, therefore, for Iqbal has an ontological basis. Man can understand and interact with his environment because he has some affinity with it. But man is not entirely at home in his material environment. The reason, of course, is that the human ego belongs to a higher plane of being than the more or less dormant, undifferentiated and inarticulate egos which are the world of matter. Man's own physical organism is "a colony of egos of a lower order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of coordination." The inarticulate and dormant egos, which form the physical environment, are very loosely knit and have not that degree of coordina-

tion which would make them a real 'home' for the human ego. This explains the discontent with his environment which every developed ego has felt. But the Arch-Ego has of a set purpose devised such an environment for man. Iqbal believes that this Divine Purpose is the development and perfection of egos till they, on their finite scale, approximate to Deity. "*And we did not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in sport*"—says the Quran. There is a purpose behind this scheme of things. Man's physical environment, then, strengthens and integrates his personality ( whose essence is 'a state of tension' ) by means of a never-ceasing interaction and struggle with a partly sympathetic and partly alien and hostile environment. Just as our thought is awakened and activated into its most successful states, when it is face to face with a puzzling and dangerous situation, similarly our ego is being actively sustained and helped on to its career by the hostile and alien environment which all the time is making it conscious of its own distinction from it. This gradual integration of the ego, however, is not a process of simple becoming, for the ego is an active and selective participant in it. The ego is not being made ; it is making itself ; i.e. it is actively co-operating with its environment in the gradual realization of its being. It certainly owes its origin to the Arch-Ego ; its gradual integration in the midst of its environment is also in no small measure due to sources external to it ; but it still plays a part — and if it is to be true to the Divine Purpose which inspired its creation—it should play a dominant part in its own make. Thus the ego is in a vital sense self-creative. "Man cannot be understood as a mere thing in space. His judgements, will, attitudes, aims and aspirations reveal him."

This quality of self-creativity, however, is not true of the sub-human egos, nor is it true in equal measure of all human egos. If the great universe of human egos were to be thought of as an ascending series, the egos with the best integration would have to be placed at the top. The best integration of the ego, i. e. its uniqueness begotten of the greatest tension, is

effected by Love. Love is the "principle of individuality and of assimilative activity." "It individualises the lover as well as the beloved." It "fortifies the ego. But 'asking' (*su'āl*) weakens it, and all that is achieved without personal effort comes under *su'āl*."

This interaction of the human ego is also an assimilation. The ego assimilates through Love. It is the environment which is assimilated by the ego and not the ego which is assimilated by the environment. "The day and the night of the universe are the result of our revolutions," observes Iqbal, "Dost thou think that it is they that make us?" The answer to this is also afforded by the oft-quoted verse of the Poet: "To the advice of the ignorant: 'Make thy peace with the world,' I rejoin, 'Dost the world disagree with thee? Then war with it!'" A passively receptive ego, therefore, is no true ego, or at the best, it is a sub-human ego. An ego which cannot create does not even resemble the shadow of an ego.

Iqbal bases his view of the destiny of the human ego on the Quranic account of the birth of Adam and of the Vicegerency of Man on earth, according to which Man is the chosen of God ( 20 : 114 ), the trustee of a free personality, a freedom which he accepted at his peril ( 33 : 72 ), and ( with all his faults ) God's Vicegerent on earth ( 2 : 28 ). An ego endowed with such a destiny cannot accept his environment as he actually finds it but must mould it, 'not nearer to the heart's desire' as Khayyam would have it, but according to that purpose which is implicit in his being and which inspires in him that discontent with all that is around him and which forces him to war with the world. This war in itself is a creative activity since it helps to create new values. When the human ego fortified with Love actively interacts with his environment, everything takes on a new aspect and the most familiar and the humblest of objects become articulate and declare to him the secrets of being. It is as if a transmutation takes place of all that he had known before. It is true, of course, that every ego is not fit to wield this magic

wand of transmutation. Only a developed ego in varying degrees is capable of exerting this influence. Such an ego is 'a man of faith' (*marde mu'min*)—an ego on the road to perfection.

Like all thinkers in the world of Islam who have pondered on this problem, Iqbal believes that the beneficent and consciously exerted influence of such 'a man of faith' is always creative of good. He transmutes and ennobles all who come in contact with him. He makes destiny and he makes history, viz. the history of man's intellectual, moral and spiritual achievement. His 'gaze' changes the meaningless into the meaningful, the lowly into the noble, ashes into fire and mere existence into creative life.

I asked a lofty sage what life must be.  
 'The wine whose bitterest cup is best', said he.  
 Said I, 'A vile worm rearing its head from mire.'  
 Said he, 'A Salamander born of fire !'  
 'Its nature steeped in evil,' I pursued.  
 Said he, 'Tis this evil that makes it good.'  
 'It wins not the goal, though it aspire.'  
 'The goal,' said he, 'lies hid in that desire'.  
 Said I, 'Of earth it comes, to earth it goes.'  
 Said he, 'The seed bursts the earth, and is the rose.'

Iqbal is perfectly conscious of the pain and the sorrow, the hardship and the heartache, the toil and the tears, the privations and the fortitude which are the soil in which such an ego grows and which are all too often its portion in its earthly existence, "For ages does the Narcissus bewail its lack of vision. After what anguish is one of a discerning eye born in the garden !" This man of the discerning eye, the man of vision and of faith, is an ego on the road to perfection, playing a decisive part in the war with the environment which is, as we have seen, the function of other egos too. But whereas their interaction with their environment is creative in only a very minor degree, 'the man of faith' is always richly creative. He is nearest God because he has assimilated most thoroughly God's peculiar attribute of creativity. Such an ego actively fulfils his function of God's Vicegerency on earth because he creates new values, ennobles

the egos that come in contact with him and transmutes even inanimate things into something better. Such men are the chosen of God—'God's partymen and helpers.' It is such men that Iqbal also is after. The development of such men should be the goal of a community's system of education. More than thirty years ago Iqbal had correctly diagnosed the malady his own community was suffering from. He thus addressed the Muslim of his day : "Gone is the zeal which had no thought of consequence. Gone also is the thought which encompassed the heavens. Neither genius nor fanatic hast thou in thy midst". A community with no outstanding egos in its midst, no men of vision, of feeling and of action in it, is not a community of men in Iqbal's interpretation of the term. The ego in its highest form should be creative. This is the law of its own nature and this also is its divinely appointed destiny. The actual and the ideal should coincide in the developing ego.

"Stranger to yourself, the Vision yonder  
You sought, to Sinai ran.  
Nay, 'tis in search of Man your feet must wander :  
God too is seeking Man."

Creation, however, can be of the good as well as of the bad. How then can we distinguish between the two ? What is the criterion of value ? Iqbal finds in the idea of personality a standard of value. "That which fortifies personality is good ; that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the standpoint of personality." Iqbal enunciated this standard of value early in his *Asrar Khudi*, and I am not sure that he ever fully transcended it. But in the post-Masnawi period of his poetry—his richest and profoundest period, in my view—we find another criterion of the good also at work. The ego on the road to perfection gradually attains to a coincidence between the principle of development implicit in his own being and the purpose which his Divine Maker has set before him as the goal of his conscious endeavour. The ego who has realized this coincidence is always creative of the good, while the ego who

has effected a divorce between the two principles, is creative of the bad. Instead of creating value, the latter evolves disvalue. Such an ego will not be a 'helper' of God's but of Satan's who is the leader of the forces of evil, a rebel against his Creator but not independent of Him. The relation between the three, God, Man and Satan is a most interesting problem and Iqbal has given us some extremely illuminating ideas on the subject. The story of Satan (*Iblis*) is in many ways the common heritage of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the place of the Iblis-ego in the scheme of things is a matter of vital interest for students of ethics and religion. But as the problem immediately before us is that of human creativity, we need only say that according to Iqbal's view Iblis is a creative agent, the supreme creator of disvalue. As such, he plays a vital part in the moral order of the universe. Iblis, however, is not now so sure that he deserves this dishonourable supremacy. For instance, in some of the later poems of Iqbal, he threatens to resign his job because better qualified people are now available for it.

In short, the world for Iqbal is not something made, it is in the making, and the human ego has to play an important part in the making of it. Like the Arch-Ego—God, man also is (in a minor degree) a creator of values. God is not the sole creator: '*He is the best of creators,*' as the Quran says. But man can be truly creative only if his ego is properly integrated and fortified by Love.

Fortified by Love and by Prayer, then, the ego improves its inherent capacity for creation. This creative capacity ensures Man's place in the developing universe. Creation is a continuous and never-ending process. The multiplicity of the 'is' is no index to the richness of the 'shall be,' "there are other universes beyond the stars," as he says. It is, therefore, necessary to subject the ego to periodical examination to prevent the ever-present danger of a slide from creative life into a life of mere acquiescence with what merely 'is'. Thus renovated, the ego will be able to probe the mysteries of his own destiny.



"What is the breath of life ? A message !  
Hast heard it ? No ! thou hast not.  
In thy dust lies hid a universal vision :  
Hast seen it ? No !  
Learn again to see ! Learn yet again to hear !"

Man's creative activity is the measure of this destiny. That is why Iqbal believes Man to be the only candidate for immortality. In a short poem, 'Dialogue between God and Man,' God upbraids Man, not for his lack of creativity, but for his creation of the bad. Man defends himself.

*God* "Out of the same clay and water did I create the world. Thou hast created Iran and Tatar and Zang. Out of earth did I create purest iron. Thou hast shaped it into the sword, the arrow and the musket ! For the beautiful tree of the garden thou hast moulded the axe ! For the bird of song thou hast constructed the cage."

*Man* "The night didst thou create. I made the lamp ! Thou didst make the clay. I shaped the wine-cup ! Thou didst create the desert, the glade and the mountain. I created the shady avenue, the orchard and the rose garden ! Out of stone have I created the mirror ! Out of sheer poison have I extracted the elixir of life !"





# LOCHANA PANDITA'S RAGATARANGINĪ AND ITS HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE\*

By KSHITIMOHAN SEN

ACADEMIC scholars may not have much interest in what has been discussed so far, as they have very little to do with fine arts like music. I shall, therefore, now try to evaluate the historical importance of Lochana Pandita's book on Music. *Rāgatarāṅginī* can help a great deal in solving a knotty problem of the history of our country. The use of the term 'Daśa Daṇḍa' led Viṣṇu Sukhtankar to think that the author was either a Bangalee or a Maithili.<sup>1</sup> He also thought that Lochana might have belonged to Kashmir as time was calculated by the movement of the Great Bear ( 'Saptarṣi' ) in his book.<sup>2</sup>

But the word 'Daṇḍa' is used even outside Bengal and Mithila. It is also used in places like Benares. Calculation of time according to 'Saptarṣi' is not unknown in other parts of India although it is more common in Kashmir and adjoining places. From what Kamalākara Bhatta had said against the calculation by 'Saptarṣi' in his book *Tattvaviveka* we conclude that calculation by 'Saptarṣi' was known in Benares.

It is affirmed according to calculation by 'Saptarṣi' that 'Saptarṣi' stays for a century in each Nakṣatra. Therefore the calculation is done by replacing the numeral 'hundred' by the name of a Nakṣatra. Of course the digits of units and tens are used. According to one system 'Saptarṣi' is calculated from the beginning of 'Kali Yuga'. According to another 25 years are first deducted from Kali Era and then the 'Saptarṣi' era is calculated. The first system is not very common in Kashmir. The second

\* Continued from the previous issue.—*Ed.*

1. Introduction p. 2. ( *Rāgatarāṅginī* edited by Keshab Dattatreya Joshi, Poona, 1918 )

2. *Ibid.*

is more in use there. In Kalhan's famous book *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* this second system is mentioned.

लौकिकान्दे चतुर्विंशे शककालस्य संप्रतम् ।

सप्तत्याभ्यधिकं जातं सहस्रं परिवत्सराः ॥

( Taraṅga 1, Verse 52 )

That shows that 1070 Saka Era was the 24th year of Laukika or Saptarṣi calculation. In this calculation the second system has been followed. In the state Chamba near Kashmir in the Himalayas some old scripts record 1582 Saka Era the as 36th of Saptarṣi era. The second system has been followed here also. This system has been referred to in the sloka quoted by Buller in his report on Kashmir. ( p. 60 )

कल्मेषैः सायकनेत्रवर्षैः सप्तविंश्यास्त्रिदिवं प्रयाताः ।

लोकै हि संवत्सरपत्रिकायां सप्तविमानं प्रवर्दन्ति सन्तः ॥<sup>1</sup>

The practice of calculating the Saptarṣi by deducting twenty-five years from the Kali Era is not generally found outside Kashmir. In Lochana's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* Saptarṣi was in Viśākhā for 61 years, and it was 1082 Saka era.

भुजवसुदशमिते शाके

वर्षैकषष्टिभोगे

मुनयस्त्वाप्तं विशाखायाम् ॥ ( p, 14 )

Sāka Era 1082 is synchronous with 4261 Kali Era. The deduction of the first 27 Nakṣatras, that is 2700 years, leaves out 1561 years. After that the 15 Nakṣatras covered 1500 years. Then comes the period of the 16th Nakṣatra Viśākhā. That was the 61st year of the tenure of Viśākhā. This leaves us in no doubt that the Sāka Era as described by Lochana and the Kali Era of the Saptarṣi calculation are in perfect agreement. But in this calculation of Saptarṣi, 25 years have not been deducted from the Kali Era. This practice of doing without the deduction

prevails mostly outside Kashmir. This leads one to suppose that Lochana most probably did not belong to Kashmir.

Then comes the question from what particular province Lochana hailed. We need not try to find an answer from the use of the word 'Daṇḍa'. Lochana himself has been very clear on that point in the above sloka. The full text of the sloka runs thus :—

भुजवसुदशमितशाके

श्रीमद्बल्लालसेनराज्यादौ ॥ ( p. 14 )

Had the name of Ballāla Sena been familiar to Vishnu Sukthankar there would have been no necessity for him to grope in the dark. Ballāla Sena was a famous ruler of Bengal. The Saptarṣi calculation was not unknown in Bengal and there was a close intercourse between that province and Kashmir. In both the provinces Kalāpa was studied instead of Pāṇini. Bengal and Kashmir had much in common in Āyurveda, Tantricism and in the Śaiva cult. The same commentaries are favoured in both provinces. When Bengal used Saptarṣi calculation, the 25 years from the Kali Era were not deducted.

Much controversy centres round the probable date of Ballāla Sena and Lakṣmaṇa Sena. According to some the Lakṣmaṇa Era founded by Lakṣmaṇa Sena, son of Ballāla Sena begins from 1107 A. D.<sup>1</sup> Again, according to Dr. Keilhorn the Era begins from 1118-19<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the books *Dānasagara* and *Adbhutasāgara* written by Ballāla Sena were composed in 1090 and 1091 Saka Era respectively. Nagendranath Basu and Nalinikanta Bhattacharya have admitted the authenticity of the dates of these two works.

The Lakṣmaṇa Era has nothing to do with the dates of Ballāla Sena and Lakṣmaṇa Sena of Bengal. We shall get confused if we base our calculation on Lakṣmaṇa Era. H. C. Roychowdhury has shown that the Lakṣmaṇa Era was really

1. J. Beams—*Indian Antiquary*, 1876, p. 800.

2. R. D. Banerji—*Bāṅglār Itihāsa*, Part I, pp. 291.

founded by the Sena Kings of Peethi in Bihar.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bhandarkar in his chapter on inscriptions of Northern India has mentioned the Sena Kings<sup>2</sup> but has not made any reference to the date of Ballāla Sena.

Owing to the above reasons, and also due to the dearth of trustworthy copper-plates, even scholars like Rakhal Das Banerji could not correctly calculate the dates of the Sena Kings.

Inscriptions of the Sena Kings would have helped us much if we could discover them. The villages mentioned in Ballāla's Katwa copper-plate exist even now. It follows that a study of those copper-plates will be of great historical help. Another copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇa Sena was found in Mādhāinagara in the district of Pabna. Prasanna Narayan Chowdhury deciphered it and published his version in the journal *Aitibāsik Chitra*.<sup>3</sup> Then Rakhal Das Banerji<sup>4</sup> and Nityagopal Majumdar carried on extensive researches on this copper-plate. But there is still room for further investigation. The Mādhāinagara copper-plate was issued in the twenty-fifth regnal year of Lakṣmaṇa Sena.

Pandit Chintaharan Chakravarty has very definitely proved that Lakṣmaṇa Sena ascended the throne in 1178 A. D.<sup>5</sup> and Rao Bahadur Kasinath Dixit corroborates this view by astronomical calculations.<sup>6</sup> Thus the twenty-fifth year of Lakṣmaṇa's reign was 1203 A. D.

Ikhtiaruddin Muhammad invaded Nadia in the month of Kartika of 1202 A. D. Lakṣmaṇa Sena was nearing eighty at that time.<sup>7</sup> He left Nadia and retired to East Bengal. There on the 27th Śrāvaṇa, 1203 A. D. he performed the ceremony known as Aindrīmahāsanti for relieving of the distress of his Kingdom.

1. Dr. H. C. Roy Chowdhuri,—Sir Asutosh Mookerji Jubilee Commemoration Volume—*Orientalia* Pt. II, pp. 1-5.

2. *Epigraphica Indica*, Appendix Vol. XIX-XXII, p. 408.

3. 1899, Vol. I. pp. 92-94.

4. J. A. S. B., 1909 pp. 467.

5. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. III, pp. 186 ff.

6. *Epigraphica Indica*, XXI, pp. 215-16 Arch-Survey Report, 1984-85, p. 69.

7. Nalinikanta Bhattasali, *Parganati—Era*, Indian Antiquary, 1928.

In the month of Bhādrathe Mādhāinagara copper-plate was issued. It was a land-grant as a Dakṣiṇā for the ceremony.<sup>1</sup> Aindri Santi is a propitiatory ceremony performed when the state is in great danger. It has been prescribed in *Adbhutasāgara*.

Another copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇa Sena was discovered long ago. A copper-plate was found in 1790 in the village Rājābādi near Jaidevpur in the district of Dacca. It came under the possession of Raja Lokanārāyaṇa the landlord of that village. Lokanārāyaṇa's son Raja Golokanārāyaṇa made over the plate to Mr. Walters, the District Magistrate of Dacca in the year 1829. Mr. Walters in his turn sent it to Mr. H. H. Wilson, the Secretary of the Asiatic Society for the purpose of proper deciphering. On May 6, 1829 Mr. Wilson referred to this copper-plate at a meeting of the Society. It appears that Mr. Wilson took it along with him to London when he went there as the Librarian of the India House. It remained there unnoticed for about a century. This very copper-plate was referred to in the history of Bhāwāl written by one Nabinchandra Bhadra about sixty years ago. Raja Rajendralal Mitra and General Cunningham could not make any use of this copper-plate in their researches about the date of the Sena Kings.

Nalinikanta Bhattasali, Curator of Dacca Museum started a regular quest after it on the information supplied by the work of Nabinchandra Bhadra. Mr. J. D. Rankin, the Commissioner of Dacca Division, who was also the President of the Dacca Museum showed to Bhattasali a copy of the Journal of the Asiatic Society and Monthly Register Vol. XXVIII ( July-December, 1929 ), published from London. It contained a report of the meeting of the Society held on the 6th May 1829. Basing on that report Bhattasali wrote an excellent article in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1927. Thus the copper-plate which was discovered in 1790 and of which a report appeared in 1829, became the subject of discussion in 1927. Almost a century had elapsed between

1. Bhattasali—J. R. A. S. B. Vol, VIII, 1982, No. I pp. 18-20.



these reports. Bhattasali<sup>1</sup> has treated the historical facts of this plate very ably. It is similar to the Mādhānagara plate and was issued in the 27th regnal year of Lakṣmaṇa Sena. This was followed by an article by Dr. Randle in the *Indian Historical Quarterly* of 1939 (pp.300). Randle came across 24 copper-plates inside a safe, on his appointment in India Office Library. The plate under discussion was one of them. Afterwards this copper-plate came to Bhattasali.

This copper-plate informs us that Lakṣmaṇa Sena in his boyhood repulsed the ruler of Gauḍa.<sup>2</sup> The Devapādā Plate refers to a defeat the ruler of Gauḍa by Lakṣmaṇa's grandfather Vijayasena, who reigned from about 1095 A. D. to 1160 A. D.<sup>3</sup> His successor's ( Ballāla Sena's ) reign lasted from 1160 to Circa 1178. Govindapāla was defeated and dethroned by Ballāla in 1161.<sup>4</sup> Much of the Pāla territory in Varendra was conquered by Vijayasena. Most probably the battle took place in 1140 A. D. It is not improbable that the youthful Lakṣmaṇa Sena took part in that battle.<sup>5</sup> So it runs in the Rājāvāḍī copper-plate.

दृप्यद्गौरेश्वरश्रीहठचरणकला यस्य कौमारकेलिः । ( 19th line )

The battle was fought 26 miles due north of the temple of Pradyumneśwara at a place now called Neemdighi. Gopala III was killed in it.<sup>6</sup> The Rājāvāḍī-plate was issued in the 27th regnal year of Lakṣmaṇa Sena the 6th day of Kartika 1204 A. D. It follows therefore that there is no historical incongruity in the compilation in the 27th regnal year of Lakṣmaṇa Sena ( 1127 Saka Era ), of *Saduktikarnāmṛta* by Sridharadāsa son of Batudāsa. My esteemed friend the late Ramāvatāra Śarmā began the edition of this *Saduktikarnāmṛta*<sup>7</sup> and afterwards our worthy

1. J. A. S. B. Vol. VIII, 1942 No. 1.

2. J. B. A. S. B. Vol. VIII, 1942. Pt I, p. 28.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Bhattasali, *Indian Historical Quarterly* XVII pp. 207 ff.

7. A. S. B. 1912.

student of Vidyabhavana Pandit Haradatta Sarmā completed it. *Saduktikarnāmṛta* is an excellent anthology of that period. In the very prologue to the work Śridharadāsa has mentioned Lakṣmaṇa Sena. Before this anthology another compilation *Kavīndravachanasamuccaya* was collected by a Buddhist poet, in Bengal. Its date is probably 11th or 12th century. F. W. Thomas on behalf of the Asiatic Society of Bengal edited it from an original written in the 12th century script in 1911 A. D. Lochana Pandita also composed his *Rāgatarāṅgini* in this province.

Lakṣmaṇa Sena left Nadia and proceeded towards Kāmṛūpa through East Bengal. He spent some years in the village of Dhāryagrāma on the river Sitalakṣyā. Present Rājāvāḍi is situated just near ancient Dhāryagrāma now in the estate of Bhāwāl in the district of Dacca ( East Bengal ) Bhattashali has conclusively proved with the help of maps that the places and rivers mentioned in the copper-plate discovered at the village of Rājāvāḍi are still to be found near about the village of Rājāvāḍi.<sup>1</sup> From his capital Dhāryagrāma Mahārājādhirāja Sreemal-Lakṣmaṇa Sena Devapāda made a gift of a plot of land in Basuśree Chaturaka which was situated in Bāṇḍanā Avṛtti in Paundravardhana bhukti. The recipient of the gift was Śree Padmanābha Devaśarmā of 'Maudgalya gotra'. He was the son of Mahadeva Devaśarmā, the grandson of Jayadeva Sarmā and the great-grand-son of Krishnadeva Sarmā. Bhāwāl, in the district of Dacca, was then situated in the area of Paundravardhanabhukti.

In this copper-plate the concluding words in the twenty-ninth line are सं २७। का दिने ६। implying, "on the 6th of Kartik according to the 27th regnal year." It is evident that the correct date has been given in the colophon of the *Saduktikarnāmṛta* :

शाके सप्तविंशत्यधिकशतोपेतदशशते शरदाम्

श्रीमल्लक्षणक्षितिपस्य रसैकविंशोऽब्दे ।<sup>2</sup>

1. J. R. A. S. B. vol. VIII, 1942, p. 7-14.

2. Ind. Hist. Quarterly, 1927, p. 188.

This śloka from the *Saduktikarnāmṛta* has been quoted by Pandit Chintaharan Chakravarty who has established that Lakṣmaṇa Sena began his reign in 1178.<sup>1</sup> *Saduktikarnāmṛta* was written on the 20th day of Solar Phālguna in the 27th regnal year of Lakṣmaṇa Sena. So, it can be concluded that both the copper-plate of Rājāvāḍi and *Saduktikarnāmṛta* were composed in the 27th regnal year of Lakṣmaṇa Sena; the copper-plate was composed in the month of Kārtika ( 1204 A. D. ) and *Saduktikarnāmṛta* was finished in Phālguna ( 1205 A. D. ). Thus though in our calendar they fall in the same year, the English calendar records a year's difference. So the copper-plate of Rājāvāḍi and *Saduktikarnāmṛta*—both support each other. Lakṣmaṇa Sena was quite old then. His age at that time was 83. It is not known how long he lived after this. But, perhaps apprehending that this last copper-plate of the King may not be recognised by the royal officers the recipient of the gift from the King, Padmanābha had it endorsed several times. On the copper-plate can be found the following words embossed—श्री नि ( the name of the deity witnessing the grant ), महासैनिक ( The chief minister for war and peace ), श्रीमद्राज नि ( The King in person ), श्रीमदनंशकर नि ( The King's appellation ), साहसमल्ल ( perhaps, the crown prince ). Nowhere is found another copper-plate endorsed so many times.<sup>2</sup>

Ballāla's *Dānasāgara* was compiled in 1990 Saka Era which corresponds to 1168 A. D. Hence the date of *Dānasāgara* also supports the view which holds 1160 as the year of Ballāla's accession to the throne. Ballāla undertook the composition of his *Adbhuta Sāgara* in 1089 Saka Era. The concluding portion of this book was written by Ballāla's son Lakṣmaṇa Sena. This book was published by our esteemed friend late M. M. Pundit Muralīdhara Jhā ( Prabhakari Company, Benares 1905 ) This book, too corroborates the same view of 1160 as the year of Ballāla's accession. Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar in his

1. Indian Historical Quarterly, 1929, pp. 186-189.

2. J. R. A. S. B. Vol. VIII, 1942, pp. 22-28.

learned article, named "Chronology of the Sen Kings" supports the above view.<sup>1</sup> Sj. Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya also accepts the same date. I have already referred to Dr. Hem Chandra Roy Chowdhuri's view on this subject.<sup>2</sup> Hence taking into consideration all points of view we can definitely come to the conclusion that Ballāla's reign commenced in 1160 and came to an end in 1178. Lakshmaṇa Sena ascended the throne in 1178.<sup>3</sup> These facts lead to the conclusion that Ballāla's father Vijaya Sena ruled from 1095 to 1160. Ballāla ruled from 1160 to 1178.<sup>4</sup> Lakṣmaṇa Sena's reign started from 1178. There are historical proofs to support that he was on the throne at least up to 1205. After that history is silent.

1160, which is the year of Ballāla's accession corresponds to 1082 of Saka era.

Along with these proofs we can adduce a new one which is supplied by the Puṣpikā Śloka ( colophon ) of Lochana's *Rāgatarāṅginī* in which he says :—

भुजवसुदशमितशाके  
श्रीमद्बल्लालसेनराज्यादौ ।  
वर्षैकषष्टिभोगे

मुनयस्त्वासन् विशाखायाम् ॥ ( p. 14 )

This points to the year 1082 of Saka era as we have already shown. It has also been mentioned that this corresponds to 4261 of Post Kali era.

This 1082 Saka era was Ballāla Sena's regnal year श्रीमद्बल्लालसेनराज्यादौ । 1082 corresponds to 1160 A. D. So all the proofs advanced above are supported by the colophon ( पुष्पिका-श्लोक ) of Lochana Pandita's *Rāgatarāṅginī*. Most probably this newly composed book was offered publicly as a suitable present by the court musician on the auspicious day of Ballāla's accession to the throne.

1. J. R. A. S. B. 1921, p. 7-16.

2. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Jubilee Commemoration Volume, *Orientalia* Pt. II. p. 1-5.

3. J. R. A. S. B. Vol. VIII, 1942 No. 1, p. 18.

4. *Ibid* p. 28.

# REALISM AND POETRY

By JOHN O. BURTT

WE all have some idea of what we mean by realism and some idea of what we mean by poetry, though both are vague words. Realism, I suppose, in its most general sense is taken to stand, at worst, for an acceptance of the more sordid sides of life as normal, or at best, perhaps, for the mental attitude of men of affairs or even scientists. In any case it would seem at first sight to be far removed from poetry, associated as this often is with romance and the realm of the imagination. But poetry, however fanciful, is bound to be realistic up to a point ; for it deals, after all, with real things, not necessarily those which exist or have existed, but things which are subject to the laws of reality. The same, of course, might be said of other types of art, but poetry is in a special position because it uses language as its instrument ; and, since language is also an instrument of logic and every-day affairs, poetry invites direct comparison with these seemingly matter-of-fact activities in a way which, let us say music, does not. In this essay I propose to consider whether the attitude proper to a poet, as it is revealed in his work, can justly be called a realistic one. The reader should be warned however that I know no positive answer to this question and should therefore treat the following paragraphs as constituting an enquiry rather than an exposition.

Poets themselves have written on poetry with varying degrees of success and one may ask whether a man who is not himself a poet is entitled to meddle with the subject. In this connection it is well to realise, in an age when specialisation is treated with a greater awe than it deserves, that there are some subjects—and poetry, I think, is one of them—on which the layman has a claim to speak simply because he is a layman. Most poets, I suppose, write their poetry without a conscious desire to please anyone in particular. ( The fact that in special cases

they may wish to satisfy a certain section of the public for some specific purpose, as for instance making money, is of course irrelevant. ) They would however admit, I think, that the value of their work does depend to some extent on the judgement of others, and if asked whether these others must themselves be poets would unhesitatingly answer no. For although, as poets, they are themselves above the ordinary and although their primary inducement to compose may be a simple wish for self-expression, they still hope, I think, that in so expressing themselves they are speaking to, or speaking for, the ordinary men of their generation. Even so, we should remember, when setting up as critics, that, although a certain poem may move us deeply, there is no guarantee that the state of mind which it evokes in us as readers is of the same order as that which prompted the poet to write it. It is however reasonable to assume that, if a poem provokes an appreciative response in us, as opposed to leaving us cold or arousing positive antipathy, we do catch something of the poet's mental state which found expression in it. What I have to say is based on the assumption that poetry can be understood by the reader no less than by the poet, from which it follows that those of us who care for poetry, without ourselves composing it, are still entitled to express our views upon it, and may even do so with some profit.

Since we are trying here to trace a connection between realism and poetry the most satisfactory method of enquiry would appear to be first to define them both and then, having in our minds a clear idea of what each is, to consider poetry, both as regards its form and subject matter, with a view to seeing how far realism enters into it. This method is unfortunately out of the question, for I find myself unable either to give a definition of realism or poetry which would serve our purpose or to divide the form of poetry from its subject matter. I shall therefore content myself with a few general observations upon each of them in the hope that these may shed a little light on a rather difficult subject.

Realism, I suppose, is the disposition to see things as they are, and although this does not tell us much, I think we can say that so defined its meaning becomes more elusive than the unwary would suspect. For the power to see things as they really are is not a gift bestowed upon any particular class of persons in view of their temperament or calling. It is rather a standard to be aimed at. There is however no doubt that certain attitudes of mind are more realistic than others, though it may not be easy to determine which these are. For instance it is natural to conclude that a thousand people who are not in love with a particular woman take a more realistic view of her than the one man who is ; and the reason for this conclusion is partly that they are in the majority and partly that apathy is a more common state of mind than sympathy and so presumably more realistic. Realism has certainly something to do with the outlook of the majority, and yet it has something to do with knowledge also ; for there are certain occasions when we should reject the majority's interpretation of a situation, as for instance in a medical matter, where the view of one doctor might be accepted as more correct, or if you like more realistic, than that of a hundred other people. Since we are ready in this case to disregard mere weight of numbers, we might well enquire why the lover also is not taken as an expert, on the assumption that he has a special knowledge of the woman which others do not possess. Without pursuing this point further we can, I think, form one conclusion, namely that realism may well turn out to be an attitude of mind attainable to a greater or lesser extent by all men at different times rather than an attitude to be found in most men at all times. We are not therefore justified, so far as I can see, in dismissing poetry as unrealistic because it reflects an outlook different from that which most of us usually adopt.

These rather negative remarks on realism must serve us for the present. Before returning to it I shall make a general point regarding poetry which seems to me of prime significance. In doing this I make no claim to have selected a characteristic of

poetry whereby it can be clearly differentiated from prose, religion, history, or anything else with which it may be compared. I do hold however that there is a certain response to life which would most rightly be classed as that of a poet, even though it might appear in the writings of let us say a professional scientist or an ecclesiastic, and in the next two paragraphs I shall try to explain what I consider to be its leading feature.

Although technique may vary greatly, so that it is not justifiable to insist on the presence, for instance, of metre, rhyme, or special poetic diction, still there is a characteristic which, I think, is fundamental to all poetry, namely this : that it portrays a world from which no attempt has been made to divorce the human consciousness, a world confessedly experienced by a thinking feeling man. Compare it for a moment in this respect with science. The physical world as conceived by natural science is one which exists independently of the observer. It contains a vast number of objects distinct from each other, and the method by which science seeks to explain these is analysis : that is to say the breaking down of one unit into smaller component units, as for instance water is explained in terms of hydrogen and oxygen. Poetry, on the other hand, makes no attempt to separate the physical world from the mind of the being who interprets it ; it is less interested than science in isolating objects or events, and its method of presenting them is rather synthetic than analytic ; for poetry depends upon the building up of a fabric of associations and emotions on something simple which has been observed. If the method of science is objective that of poetry can be more fairly called subjective, and I shall now explain briefly what I mean by this.

The general fact that poetry is bound up with human activities and passions is beyond dispute. A love lyric is an obvious illustration of this, purely concerned with emotion ; and the same is true of epic and drama where the mere narrated events would be without poetic value but for the universality of their application from human standpoint and the sympathy which they arouse



in the reader or spectator. In this broad sense poetry is subjective because it is personal, but even in the more detailed handling of subjects less connected with man the same is true of it. For poetry countenances, as science, I believe, does not, the reading of the human self into what lies before the eyes ; and the tendency to do this can be traced in varying degrees all through the poetry of nature. Sometimes it is a matter of simple personification :

The moving moon went up the sky  
And nowhere did abide :  
Softly she was going up  
And a star or two beside.

often there is implicit also in the description the response of the observer :

Coldly, sadly descends  
The autumn evening ! The field  
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts  
Of withered leaves, and the elms,  
Fade into dimness apace,  
Silent ;

The poet has ventured no open comment yet, but words like 'coldly', 'sadly', 'dimness' reveal in the picture an interplay between the perceiver and the perceived. The influence of the perceiver is frequently more dominant than this. As in those poems where a whole world of individual thought and dream is opened up by some simple observed fact. The sound of the horn at evening, reaching De Vigny from the depths of the wood where the wind is rustling the leaves, calls up a picture of Charlemagne and his knights and bring home with its haunting echo the pathos of Roland's last stand against the Moors. Or the Great Bear, high above his garden, awakens in Leopardi the memories of a childhood spent among the beauties of a quiet countryside and so leads on to a cry of disillusionment, just as a cry is wrung from Keats by the song of the nightingale. The fact before the poet's senses, seemingly so simple, serves as a gateway, or rather is itself transformed into a creation, of the

mind, perhaps a tissue of associations "wild with all regret" or a fairland beyond the reach of everyday experience :

Where are those starry woods ? O might I  
    wander there,  
 Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air  
 Bloom the year long !

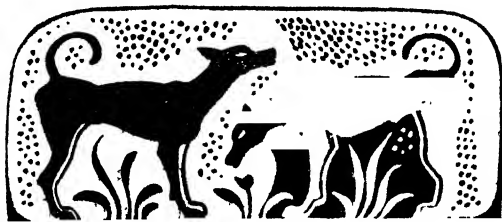
When the imagination is given free rein no one will doubt the subjectivity of poetry, but I am not concerned here to make a distinction between fanciful and factual, romantic or classical. Even if you select those poems where the writers hold themselves down, so to speak, without allowing any obvious intrusion of their personalities, complete objectivity is not achieved, nor is it ever intended.

Landscape plotted and pieced— fold, fallow, and plough ;  
 The line is bare of ornament, almost all nouns, but in its terse syllables, its stops and consonants, one can feel, fused as it were with the landscape, the sense of contrast ; and for contrast to be at all there must be a consciousness to feel it. In short when I say that poetry is subjective I mean that the presence of an experiencing caring being is always implicit in the world of poetry, whether you take as your example the elaborate vagaries of Shelley or the exquisite simplicity of a Greek epigram.

What has this to do with realism ? Let us go back for a moment. I have maintained that poetry is this result of an attitude of mind, experienced at times not only by poets but by ordinary men, and that realism also is in some way a part of the common outlook of mankind. If these conclusions are justified, in this respect at least the two are not incompatible. Indeed poets themselves have often striven to keep their work in touch with those aspects of experience which they have held to be living, basic and real. On the other hand subjectivity, which I have assumed to be essential to poetry undoubtedly implies the possibility of individual aberrations, which make against a realistic outlook. Moreover the fact that there is in poetry a tinge of inspiration and emotional transport, which can never characterise

a steady or lasting mental state, is another factor which presents some difficulty. Such tentative answers as I can offer to these two allied problems are latent in what I have said already. In the first place, despite its inherent tendency to error and illusion, which baffles explanation, I cannot seriously doubt that subjectivity, in the rather broad sense in which I have tried to explain it, is a prerequisite of realism, for I do not see how realism, the ability to see things as they are, can come to be at all without some active process of interpreting, in the light of memory and imagination, which is the sole means we know of probing what lies before our eyes. And furthermore it seems to me an inescapable fact that the real world—at least the only world of which we could ever have experience—is one which exists within the purview of the mind, great though the range of that may be, and as such it is through and through conditioned by mind, shaped by its modes of thought, coloured by its emotions; it is in fact more nearly the world we grasp at in our daily lives than what we try to make of it for purposes of intellectual study. Poetry, with its tacit recognition of feeling and imagination as essential modes in which reality must be experienced, is, in my opinion, more near to realism than a science which seeks to view the universe as something in whose nature the knowing feeling consciousness plays no constructive part. Secondly regarding inspiration. My purpose earlier, in instancing a man in love, was to hint that realism may make demands on the emotional, by which I mean that a full knowledge of things as they are might entail, besides mere intellectual satisfaction, some element more nearly akin to the experience of a lover or the inspiration of a poet, which goes beyond the intellect. And yet it is fairly clear, I think, that the ability to see things as they are requires a steady unwavering vision, very different from that alternation between insight and insensitivity from which neither lover nor poet is ever free. From this dilemma there are two ways out. One is to conclude that realism consists in a conception of the world such as can be formed and held at the same level throughout a

a man's experiencing life and thus leave out the times of so-called revelation as inexplicable delusions unjustified by the real nature of things. The other is to admit, what I have already suggested, that realism is only partially achieved by any of us, and in different degrees at different times. To attain it fully, really to be aware of things as they are, one would have, presumably, to sustain without a lapse the mental condition which accompanies man's moments of greatest insight. The trend of this essay is to suggest that of the two the second answer approximates more nearly to the truth and that the mental attitude there envisaged might well involve a sense of exaltation not unlike the state of mind which finds in poetry its most satisfactory means of expression.



# MUKALAMA BABA LAL WA DARA SHIKHU

By BIKRAMA JIT HASRAT

Baba Lal told me : 'Be not a Shaikh, be not a saint, be not a wielder of miracles ; be rather a *faqīr*—unpretentious and sincere !'

DARA SHIKUH

Baba Lal, a Hindu mendicant and the founder of a petty modern Indian monotheistic sect, known after his name as the *Bābā Lālīs*, belonged to the order of Kabīr.<sup>1</sup> "Baba Lal is one of the perfect gnostics," observes Dara Shikhū, "He is unparalleled in the Hindu community in majesty and firmness. He told me : 'Gnostics are to be found in every community and through their grace that community is granted salvation by God.'"<sup>2</sup> There are two conflicting statements advanced about the place of his birth. According to Pandit Sheo Narain,<sup>3</sup> who claims to possess a manuscript copy of his biography, he was a Khattrī of Qaṣūr who lived at his Asthān at Dhianpur near Batala ; but Wilson who furnishes a very vivid account of the origin and doctrines of the *Bābā Lālīs*, asserts that the founder of this apparently now extinct sect was born in Malwa in the Rajputana during Jahan-gir's reign (A. D. 1605-1627).<sup>4</sup> Apart from these two statements, it would be noticed with surprise that this sect, which had its birth in northern India in the first half of the seventeenth century, is still said to be in possession of a religious house at *Bābā Lāl kā Saila* near Baroda.<sup>5</sup>

The followers of Baba Lal are often included among the Vaiṣṇava sect ; this classification is warranted by the outward seeming of these sectaries, who streak their forehead with the

1 *Ḥasanāt-ul-ʿArifain*, (Lahore), p. 44.

2 *Ibid.* p. 44. Here Sūfī aphorisms of Baba Lal are also recorded.

3 *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, Lahore, Vol. II. p. 27-28.

4 Wilson : *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus*, in *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, 1892, p. 296.

5 Farquhar J. N. *Outline of Religious Literature*, p. 884.

*gobīchbandana* and profess veneration for Rama. They are adherents of the *Bhaktī-mārga* or the Devotional Path, though the doctrine of incarnation has no place in their teachings. Their attitude towards religion is essentially monotheistic. Their chief characteristic is a unitarian conception of Divinity. They believe in the *Sāṅkhya-Yogic* process of creation and in the immortality of soul. They hold that salvation is dependent on *karma* (action). An adherence towards a medley of Yogic, Vedantic and Śūfic tenets, both in worship and meditation, is another interesting feature of this sect. This petty offshoot of the major reformist school viz. Rāmanuja's *Sri-Sampradāya*, did not possess any individual spiritual force or any special doctrinal formulae; on the other hand, it borrowed much from the tenets of its sister sects of the same spiritual origin like the *Kabīr-Panthīs*, the *Khāḱīs*, the *Mulūk-Dāsīs* and the *Sena-Panthīs* and played only a minor role in its contribution towards the reformist upheaval of the *Bhaktī* cult which shook the foundations of Indian religious thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Bābā Lal is described as the pupil of Chetan Swāmī, the famous Indian reformer. He came to Lahore along with the latter and after attaining perfection in religious meditation, he went to Lahore in A. D. 1649 and finally settled in Sarhind in the Panjab.

Grierson,<sup>1</sup> while summarising his achievements remarks that Bābā Lal was one of those Indian reformers of the 16th or 17th centuries, who like Kabīr, Dādū and Akbar, endeavoured to found a purely monotheistic religion, combining elements partly derived from the beliefs of the Mussalman Śūfis and partly from those of the followers of the *Bhaktī-mārga*. Like Kabīr, he followed the *Bhaktī-mārga* in the name by which he referred to the Supreme viz. , Rama; but, also as in Kabīr's teachings, this Rama was not to him the Deity incarnate as the earthly prince of Oudh, but was God the Father, or in other words, Rama after he had returned to heaven from his incarnate sojourn upon

1 Bābā Lāl's (condensed from Wilson by Grierson) in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Vol. II, p. 808.

earth. The doctrine of incarnation, which is an important part of the *Bhakti-mārga*, had no place in this system. On the other hand, as in the *Bhakti-mārga* and as in Śūfism, the key-note of this system was an all-absorbing love directed to the gracious personal God. As he himself says, "the feelings of a perfect disciple have not been and cannot be described ; as it is said : 'A person asked me, what are the sensations of a lover ?' I replied, 'When you are a lover, you will know.' "

While Baba Lal was at Delhi in the year 1649 A. D., Dara Shikuh was attracted towards the saint, but he met him four years later at Lahore, where he halted after his unsuccessful return from the expedition of Qandhar. Seven discourses were held between the Prince and Baba Lal before the former left for Delhi. Wilson,<sup>1</sup> without any authority, dates the several interviews as having taken place in 1649 A. D., but this chronology is rather doubtful, as Dara Shikuh was not at Lahore in that year, and it is explicitly stated in the seventh discourse that the meeting was held at Dara Shikuh's temporary residence at Lahore. Dara Shikuh reached Lahore after the Qandhar expedition on November 22, 1653 A. D., and he remained there for three weeks ; so we can date the seventh discourse somewhere about the middle of December, 1653 A. D.

As regards the different places where the Dialogues were held, we have ample evidence at hand in the text itself. The *first* took place in the garden of Ja'far Khan at Lahore ; the *second* in the Sara'i Anwar Mahal in Badshahi Bagh ; the *third* and the *sixth* in Dhanba'i's garden ; the *fourth* in the palace of Āṣif Khan near Shahganj ; the *fifth* in the hunting-ground of Gawan near Niklanpur<sup>2</sup> and the *seventh*, which lasted for three days, at an unknown place described as *manẓil-i-daulat khāna'i dār-ul-salṭanat Lāhor*.

1. *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, London ( 1862 ) Vol. I. p. 847, ff.

2. For a description of these places and their exact location, vide. Latif's *Lahore : Its History, Architectural Remains & Antiquities*, ( 1892 ).

Darā Shikuh has recorded one of the aphorisms of Baba Lal. "Baba Lal, to whom I have made a reference elsewhere, was a *Mundya* and belonged to the order of Kabīr. He told me that spiritual leaders are of four types. The *first* is like the gold-incapable of transforming other metals to its kind. The *second* is like alchemy which can transmute dross to gold, which, however remains ever devoid of the active properties of gold itself. The *third* is like the sandalwood tree, which is capable of endowing the qualities of its species to trees of a particular receptive branch. The *fourth*—the Perfect preceptor—is like a candle, which is capable of enkindling a hundred thousand candles. To this purport, I ( Darā Shikuh ) have said the following quatrain :

"The Gnostic endows you with illumination—body and soul :

A barren thorny mound he transforms into a rose garden.

The Perfect leads you out of the erroneous path—

A candle illuminates a thousand candles !

Baba Lal told me, 'Be not a Shaikh, be not a saint, be not a wielder of miracles ; be rather a *faqīr*—unpretentious and sincere!'"<sup>1</sup>

In the course of my studies in the subject, I have come across a number of paintings of the old Mughal school, depicting some of the meetings of Darā Shikuh with Baba Lal. In the *Court Painters of the Grand Mughals*, a miniature portrays the Prince sitting by the side of Baba Lal.<sup>2</sup> The compiler gives a short account of Baba Lal in the following words : "Lal Swami was a Kshatriya, born in Malwa in the reign of Jahangir. He settled near Sarhind in the Panjab, where he built himself a hermitage together with a temple and was visited by a large number of disciples. Among those who were attracted by his teachings, was Darā Shikuh and two Pandits<sup>3</sup> who were in the Prince's service and have recorded in a work entitled *Nādir-ul-Nikāt*,

1. *Ḥasanāt-ul-'Arifn*, Muṭtaba'ī Press Delhi, A. H. 1809.

2. Binyon : Oxford, 1921 ( Plate XXII ).

3. According to Wilson ( *opt. cit.* ) the two Pandits mentioned here, were Yādū Dās and Rā'ī Chānd, but in view of the clear testimony, the Dialogues was recorded and later translated into Persian by Chāndar Bhān Brahman, ( see f. n. 1, p. 881 *Infra* ). As regards the date of the Dialogues, Binyon seems to have followed Wilson (*supra* ).



the conversation which took place between Lal Das and the Prince during seven interviews between them in the year 1649 A. D.” Another painting which was exhibited at the Second Indian Historical Records Commission, shows the Prince engaged in serious conversation with the saint.<sup>1</sup> A painting depicting the meeting of Dara Shikuh with Baba Lal may be found in the *Indian Paintings under the Mughals*.<sup>2</sup> Whether these paintings were made at the instance of the Prince or not, it might be presumed that they clearly depict three of the seven sittings which Dara Shikuh held with Baba Lal. Two versified stories depicting the relations between Dara Shikuh and Baba Lal ( called Shah Lal the Perfect ) are narrated in the *Mathnawī Kaj-kulāh* of Anandghana Khwash written in A. H. 1208.<sup>3</sup> Keeping this in view, it can be asserted that these discourses were pretty well known not only during the life time of the Prince but also one hundred and fortyfive years afterwards.

The seven discourses were originally composed in Hindi and were later on translated, according to Delhi edition,<sup>4</sup> under the title of *Nādir-ul-Nikāt* by Dara Shikuh's *mīr munshī* Rai Chander Bhan,<sup>5</sup> who was appointed later by Shah Jahan the Chief Secretary in the Imperial *Dār-ul-Inshā*.

Himself a great Persian scholar and a poet, he was a guide and friend of the prince in the course of his Sanskrit studies.

1. Appendix, p. xxv.

2. Plate xivi ( from M. Demottes Collection ).

3. *Cat. of Per. MSS. in India Office*, Vol. I, ( 2905 & 1725 ).

4. Lithographed, A. D. 1885.

5. Munshī Chander Bhān Brahman of Patiala, a pupil of Mulls Abdul Ḥakīm of Siakot was Dara Shikuh's Chief Secretary. He is the author of the famous *Chahār-Chaman*, written in a masterly Persian style and composition dealing with Shah Jahan's court, its splendours and festivals, followed by a memoir of the author's own life ; *Munshā'āt-i-Brahman*, a collection of letters to the emperor and other eminent personages of the time ; a *Dīwān* of lyrical poems entitled *Dīwān-i-Brahman*. Among his other works are the *Kārnāma*, *Tuhfat-ul-Wusarā'*, *Tuhfat-ul-Fuṣṣā*, etc., ( For more details of his works *Vide*: Ethe : 1574, 2098, 2094, also *Bodleian Cat.* Nos. 1128, 1885 & 1886 ; Rieu : I, p. 897 sq., II. p. 888, III, p. 1087a. Details about his life are given in the *Mir'āt-i-Jahānuma* and the *Mir'āt-ul-Khayāl* etc. ). He died in A. H. 1068 ( A. D. 1657—58 ), according to others in A. H. 1068 ( 1652—58 ).

He acted as an interpreter during the whole course of the Dialogues and then translated them into Persian.<sup>1</sup>

Several lithograph copies of these Discourses have been published : one edited by Charanjilal ( Delhi 1885 ), a second by Munshi Bulaqi Das, text with an Urdu translation ( Delhi 1896 ), a third published at Lahore with no date by Malik Chanandin ; and lastly the text with an excellent French translation, published in the *Journal Asiatique* ( CCIX, p. 284 sq. ) under the title "*Entre le Prince Imperial Dara Shikuh et l'asècte Hindu Baba La'l Dass* by Huart and Massignon.

While comparing the text of three afore-said Indian editions with that of the Paris edition, I was surprised to find that the text of the latter materially differs from that of the former. While the Indian editions contain exclusively discourses on asecticism, the Paris edition has an extensive theme of various comprehensive subjects relating to Hindu mythology and comparative religion. Since Baba Lal was a Hindu *yogi*, who probably did not know Persian ( as the discourses were carried on in Hindi ), it is more likely that he should be questioned by the prince on subjects connected with Hinduism. The *Mukālama Bābā Lāl wa Dārā Shikūh*, lithographed at Delhi and Lahore do not seem to have been translated from Hindi, as in both of them, we find some answers given by the Faqīr Baba Lal in Arabic.<sup>2</sup>

The two versions of the discourses are altogether different.

1. In the *Journal Asiatique*, Paris. Tome ccix, p. 284. *vide.* footnote p. 289 which says : "Ici, la ms. D. ajoute cette glose precieuse :—"*As ahl-i-farāsāt Chander Bhān Brahman ki as subān-i-Hinduṣṭī ba-lisān-i-Pārsī taqīf namūd.*"

2 *Vide.* Third Dialogue ( Lahore edition, p. 12 )

Guftam : "Maujūdātī-takia-gah'i faqīr chist ?"

Quoth I, "What are the possessions of a faqīr's monastery ?"

Guft : "*Al-muflis fī amān Allāh.*"

Quoth He, "The poor is under God's protection."

Guftam : "Barā'i faqīr chi munāsib ast ?"

Quoth I, "What is suitable for a faqīr ?"

Guft : "*Lā ilāha ill-Allāh.*"

Quoth He, "There is no God but one God."

All quotations by Wilson in the *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. XVII ( 1882 ), p. 290. sq. also seem to have been based on a text similar to that of Lahore and Delhi editions.

The *Nādir-ul-Nikāt* and the *Mukālama* do not show any relation with each other except in the partial theme on ascetic life, ( to which the latter makes a passing reference ) which both discuss in somewhat different manner. Dr. Ethe observes,<sup>1</sup> that *Nādir-ul-Nikāt* is the work of Dara Shikuh but he does not quote any authority in favour of his assertion. To me it is neither the dialogue nor a continuation of it. It is the name of *Risāla'i Haq Numā'*, as a copy of the same bears this title.<sup>2</sup>

The MS. copy of the *Mukālama* in the Berlin Library<sup>3</sup> and the Bodleian Library<sup>4</sup> not only agree with each other ( as appears from the first lines of the both quoted in their Catalogues ), but also with that preserved in the Oriental Public Library Patna.<sup>5</sup> The French critics have prepared their text by the recension of the Oxford MS. with one other MS. I have throughout followed their text.<sup>6</sup>

The Discourses are semi-religious, semi-mystical, touching slightly varied and trivial subjects on Indian religious practices, their mystic interpretations and the symbolicisms of various ritualistic ceremonies. They also show in a comparative light some aspects of Indian mythology and speculative philosophy. At places, the elucidation of the subjects is obscure, yet from the standpoint of comparative mythology, that too, is of much interest. Some of the themes mentioned in the Dialogues are given in the following :—

1. On Characteristics of Ascetic Life.
2. On various aspects of Hindu Mythology.
3. The Divine Soul and the Human Soul.
4. On Burial and Cremation.
5. On the significance of *Kāshī*.

1 *Catalogue of Persian MSS. in the India Office Library*, Vol. I. pp. 275.

2 *Vide. Catalogue of Pers. MSS. in the J. R. A. S. B. ( Curzon Collection )*.

3 Perstoh, 10,081,2.

4 *Vide. Column 781.*

5 *Hand-list of Persian MSS.* No. 1449.

6 *Journal Asiatique*, 1926, pp. 284.

6. On Idol-Worship among the Hindus.<sup>1</sup>
7. On the Creator and the Created.
8. What is Mind ?
9. What is Sleep ?
10. On Salvation.
11. On Transmigration of the Soul.

The Discourses show the inner soul of the prince, who was capable of viewing different religious tenets synthetically and was deeply interested in the science of comparative religion. Unlike Akbar, Dara Shikuh was not a compound of various aptitudes. The single feature of his 'searchings of heart' was his unlimited interest in the religious systems of the world. It must be clearly borne in mind that these Discourses did not possess the official character of the religious discussions of men of different religious groups convened at the instance of Akbar in the *'Ibādat Khāna* or the 'House of Worship' at Fatehpur Sikri ; they on the other hand, represent, the enquiries of an ardent disciple of the mystic path and the answers of the perfect guide. They can neither be said to have the 'polemical and formal character of the official conferences organised among the representatives of rival religions at the court of the Sassanid Kings'. The French critics justly remark to this effect in the following lines :—

"Ces entretiens, qui paraissent avoir réellement eu lieu vers la fin de l'année 1663/1653 n'ont pas le caractère polemique et formaliste de 'colloques' officiels organisés entre représentants de religions rivales, à la cour des Sassanides, ce sont des questions posées en toute sympathie et confiance par le prince à l'ascétique qui lui répond comme à un ami. Si les sujets abordés appartiennent aux domaines les plus variés de la civilisation traditionnelle de l'Inde (on remarquera l'exégèse

1. It is to be found in some of the miscellaneous extracts of the *Mukālama* that Idol-Worship is not only unacceptable but is diametrically opposed to tenets of the order of Kabir.

symbolique du Ramayana 27-31 ), les passages les plus originaux sont ceux où Dara Shikuh essaie de faire analyser par Baba L'al Das, en termes hindous, sa propre expérience religieuse de Musalman, et fait part de ses cas de conscience."<sup>1</sup>

As regards the significance of Baba Lal's adherence to Kabîr's order, the Editors in the Introduction remark, that in it lay the germs of reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam. They pay a very high tribute to the figures of Baba Lal and Dara Shikuh on their attempt at the mutual comprehension of the two spiritual elements :—

"Quant à l'ascète Baba L'al Das, son interlocuteur, nous avons pu relever, dans la curieuse notice que Dara Shikuh lui a précisément consacrée que c'était un *mundiya*<sup>2</sup>, . . . et qu'il était affilié à la secte de Kabir qui a protégé, au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ce germe de reconciliation généreusement semé, entre l'hindouisme et l'islam. En ce moment où l'unité de l'Inde dépend d'un nouvel effort de compréhension mutuelle entre ces deux éléments spirituels, l'attention peut s'arrêter légitimement sur les physionomies de Dara Shikuh et Baba L'al Das'.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE DIALOGUES

##### *On the Hindu Conception of Nada and Veda.*

*Dārā Shikūh* : How can one differentiate between the *Nada* and the *Veda* ?

*Bābā Lāl* : As in the case of a king and his command : the king constitutes the *Nada* and the *Veda* his command.

##### *On Idol-Worship among the Hindus.*

*Dara Shikuh* : What is the significance of idol-worship among the people of India and who has enjoined its practice ?

*Bābā Lāl* : The whole spirit of the practice is for the

1. *Journal Asiatique*, CCIX, p. 286. ff.

2. *Shatahīyāt*, Lithographed Lahore pp. 44. *Munḍiya*, in Hindi means a shaven-headed monk. The French translators explain it as ( religieux à tête rasée ).

concentration of mind. One who possesses the knowledge of the spirit, does not concern himself about the form ; but, whosoever is devoid of inner consciousness, must therefore, attach himself to external form. It is like little unmarried girls playing with dolls, who on getting married, do not concern themselves with them. Such is the case of idol-worship. Those who do not possess knowledge of the spirit, would certainly strive for its acquisition through the medium of the form ; but as soon as they gain inner consciousness, they would discard the form.

### *What is Kāshî*

*Dārā Shikūh* : It is recorded in Hindu scriptures that whosoever dies at Kashi, as a matter of course attains salvation. It is an extraordinary phenomenon ! Would it not make the virtuous and the sinner stand on an equal footing ?

*Bābā Lāl* : As a matter of fact, Kāshî symbolically signifies real existence ( *wujūd* ) and whosoever perishes in existence attains salvation.

*Dārā Shikūh* : Since every one perishes in real existence, does it mean that all who die attain *mukṭî* ( salvation ) ?

*Bābā Lāl* : None except the *Sainteté unitive* ( mahapurush ) dies in existence. Humanity dies of passion which is quite distinguishable from real existence. Passion multiplies anon : and under its subjection one is ever deprived of *mukṭî*.

### *Hindu Mythology*

In continuation of his question on the mystic interpretation of some points on Hindu mythology, Dara Shikuh enquires about a few apparently abstruse matters in the great Indian epic, the *Ramayana*. This shows that he was thoroughly conversant with Indian literature and mythology.

*Dārā Shikūh* : It is explicitly recorded in the *Ramayana* that when Ram Chandra conquered Lanka ( Ceylon ), large number of people on either side were slain. Thereafter he sprinkled the elixir ( *ab-i-hayat* ) on the dead with the result that the whole

of his own army was brought to life, but the fallen army of Ravana, which was also annihilated did not resurrect. Knowing well the established properties of the elixir—which, when sprinkled over the dead brings them back to life—how can we account for this ?

*Bābā Lāl* : This was due to the fact that at the battlefield Ravana's host had ever the thought of Rama uppermost in their minds. The advantage is evident : men of virtue who attain *mukti* with the help of genuine contemplation, never return to bodily confinement. Since they had been slain on the battlefield and prior to their death, they had the thought of Rama ever present in their minds, the army of Ravana attained salvation and did not return again to bodily confinement.

Another interesting question asked by the prince was about Sita abducted by Ravana.

*Dārā Shikūh* : How is it that Sita after being abducted by Ravana was left unmolested ?

*Bābā Lāl* : Sita in reality was *Dharma* and as such she had no relative affinity with Satan.

The curiosity of the Prince is further aroused and he asks :

*Dārā Shikūh* : Since Satan could assume the physical form of any one, why did he not become Ram Chandra ?

*Bābā Lāl* : Sita loved Ram Chandra's form but could not be afflicted by Ravana even when he assumed Rama's form. The characteristics of Rama had been ingrained within her to such an extent that she could have discerned the figure of Rama in whatever form he appeared.

*Dārā Shikūh* : Does the recitation of the sacred syllable *Om* lead one to heaven ( *Svarga* ) ?

*Bābā Lāl* : The syllable *Om* is the best among all the syllables and the effect of its recitation is as such. This statement is true in the case of one who can distinguish between things genuine and things counterfeit—though both may bear a uniform stamp—and whose knowledge is pure and unpolluted.

*Dārā Shikūh* : According to Hindu religious conception,

Srī Krishna appeared in his true form before the *gopīs* at Braj-dham. Can that form be seen by human eyes ?

*Bābā Lāl* : To those who are attached to worldly affairs, this bodyless form is not visible ; it is visible only to the *faqīrs* and *sādhūs* who have repressed carnal passions and who know how to keep their passions in check, but who at the same time, do not exterminate them in order that their minds may not go astray.

*Dārā Shikūh* : It is recorded in Persian works that God the Almighty has created man out of the four elements ( earth, water, fire and air ), but according to Indian conception, man is created out of five elements ( *pañcabhūta* ). What is the fifth element ?

*Baba Lal* : The fifth element is the *Ākāśa*, which is named *Saravan-saktī* ( power of hearing ) and through which one can feel the good and the evil. *Saravan-sakti* draws one towards the Almighty.

*Dara Shikūh* : In what state a *faqīr* can be said to be detached from the mundane world ?

*Baba Lal* : The living beings ever eat, drink, see, hear and rest. In these matters they are helplessly tied, but those who do these things without being attached to them and who can also remain unperturbed even in case of lack of food etc., may be said to be free from mundane attachments.

### *What is Mind ?*

*Dara Shikūh* : What is the significance of Mind ?

*Baba Lal* : By saying : "My Mind and yours." Mind attracts our souls towards mother, father, brother and woman and falls in love. It should also be known that the love of duality is through the Mind.

*Dara Shikūh* : What is the invisible shape of Mind ?

*Baba Lal* : It is like the wind.

*Dara Shikūh* : How is it ?



*Baba Lal* : As the wind uproots the trees but is invisible, in the same way, Mind, though it exists in reality, is not visible when it accelerates the five senses. It should therefore be presumed, that the shape of the ( invisible ) Mind is like the wind.

*Dara Shikūh* : What are its functions ?

*Baba Lal* : It is a go-between of souls.

*Dara Shikūh* : How ?

*Baba Lal* : The "shop" of five senses, whom the Indians term the "*Indriyanis*" stock physical pleasures and communicate them to the souls with the result that the latter becomes entangled in sinful sensuality. Since Mind acts as an agent in procuring the commodity from the "shop" for the buyer, it receives its commission and stands aloof, while the buyer and seller respectively stand to lose or gain in the bargain. In this manner Mind is a go-between of souls. This is its correct estimate.

### *The Creator and the Created*

*Dara Shikūh* : How can one differentiate between the Creator ( *Khāliq* ) and the Created ( *Makhlūq* ) ? I enquired of a man and he replied : "Like the tree and its seed." Is this interpretation true or otherwise ?

*Baba Lal* : The *Khāliq* is like an ocean and the *Makhlūq* like a clay-jug full of its water. Notwithstanding the uniformity of the water with that of the ocean, the jug gives it a different shape. Such is the difference between the Creator and Created.

### *On the Human Soul and the Divine Soul.*

*Dara Shikūh* : How can the *Paramatman* become the *Jīvatman* and how does it finally return to its original form ?

*Baba Lal* : In the manner of the water contained in the wine—the latter when poured over earth, leaves on its surface all intoxicating and alcoholic ingredients and whatever is absorbed in the soil, is again water. In the same way, human beings endowed with individual soul, by shaking off the existent

'intoxication' of the five senses, become one with the Divine Soul.

*On Sleep.*

*Dara Shikūh* : What is that sleep which the Indians call as *Nindra* ?

*Baba Lal* : Sleep—it is both the slumber and the awakening in pursuit of wordly coveteousness. The real awakening dawns at the cessation of all ideas of worldly possessions ( *mā-o-manī* ). Love never dies out in the minds of the divines ; they ever die ( sleep ) in it and they ever rise with it.

*Dara Shikūh* : What is the sleep of the divines ?

*Baba Lal* : The renunciation of all wordly desires and freedom from all personal possessions. In his sleep, the divine dreams not of any material objects. Perhaps in the Indian *Yoga*, the divines are themselves called the *Nindra* ; as they are above worldly slumbers and awakenings.



## TRADITION AND MODERN POETIC THOUGHT

*By* SUNIL CHANDRA SARKAR

MANY intelligent men, who thought they were well equipped for literary appreciation, have been known to have turned away from modern English poetry in sheer disgust. Some of them discover in it pure exhibitionism—a sacrifice of poetry and even sense for the mere pleasure of flaunting one's supposed originality. And even those who are more sympathetic and would not go so far, who would rather concede that the newness of this poetry is not merely a stunt, but a reality, find themselves unable to view all this newness with complacency and unmixed approval. Esoteric and forbidding, they would say it is, inspite of all this newness, or rather because of it. If ever in history there was a violent attempt to break away completely from past tradition and cast all common standards of enjoyment and understanding to the winds, it is now to be seen in the work of these poets. It is this ruthless alienation from accepted values and standards, they would deplore, that has considerably weakened this poetry and diminished its chances of success.

Desperately untraditional as this poetry may look, the critical theories that support it and explain its genesis would startle one out of any self-complacent mood of judgment, by their unexpected emphasis on tradition. It is to relate poetry to life, we are told, that all this newness—in matter and manner and technique—, has been requisitioned. If there has been a break, it is with a decadent tradition. The aim is to re-discover the real tradition, the main stream of the living tradition, with which life and poetry must be brought into immediate contact or face inanition and death.

Modern poetry may not yet have gained, at least in some quarters the prestige and importance that it claims. It may be,

most probably, is dismissed by men of culture as something that does not matter. But it would not be so easy to dismiss modern criticism with a smile of superiority. It has already become a vital force. Even so far away, in Bengal, its repercussions are clearly perceptible. And it is as it should be. It concerns, us, it concerns all men living in these times. Because this criticism is not merely the manifesto of a particular school of poets, nor is it the credo of a particular movement. It is an attempt to see the entire bulk of literature the world has produced as a whole and to see it together with the life that each variety of literature represents. It is an attempt to discover the relation between a particular form of life and the literature it has produced, between one pattern of life that has disentangled itself from the general sweep and another, between one kind of literary activity and another.

Since the beginning of this century, or indeed the symptoms of the malady may be traced back to a much earlier period, a general complaint has been heard all over Europe that life is growing unreal. Up to the last great war, the vague grievance was allowed to rankle and ferment with no remedy suggested, no definite line of attack being undertaken. But with the bitter taste of the reality of the war in their mouth, the poets began to see and suggest, to undertake literary expeditions. Life, as they lived it, was indeed unreal. But it was not because of the all-enveloping miasma of the Romantic tradition which, they supposed, had screened from view the throbbing reality. The screen was pulled down, and there was the reality of the war, the reality of the anguish-riven soul extinguishing itself in dead callousness. This was not the reality they were looking for. So it was now a question of choice, as indeed it always had been ; now only more emphatically so. For was not the former eagerness for reality 'red in tooth and claw', a matter of choice, an avidity for facts and figures, for something raw and racy, for physical experiences on the animal plane and mental experiences on the political plane ? Now it was realised that a

capricious choice would always lead to a fractional reality ; that in mapping out life as it is today an intelligent choice of view-points and an objective scale of measurement have to be used ; and that this scale of measurement must be proved by time and standardised by experience, that is to say, it must derive its authenticity from tradition.

The reality then is neither in the life as it is lived ; nor merely in the rude exposure of whatever is hidden behind current cant and cliché, existing sentiments and beliefs, policies and procedures. The discovery of its outline calls for a strenuous exercise of a broadened, educated imagination. And the only manner in which the imagination can be educated, is to bring it into intimate contact with all the great traditions of the world.

The magnitude of importance attached to tradition will be apparent from the following passage from the essay, *Tradition and Individual Talent* by T. S. Eliot :

“We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet’s difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors ; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.”

2

But what is tradition ?

The tradition referred to in the passage quoted is obviously a literary tradition. And a mere enumeration of all the great traditions that are usually talked about would at once enable one to see that they are not all of the same nature ; they can be classified. Some are religious, some literary, some socio-political and some even philosophical.

In this connexion, it should be helpful to undertake an examination of the position of T. S. Eliot, whose critical intelligence is supposed by many to be of the same stature as Matthew Arnold's, and who is considered to be the first critic of integrity after him. The following facts about Eliot's literary career should give additional significance and importance to this enquiry. It was Eliot who first rescued modern poetry from its nebulous stage and gave it a definite shape. It was his poetry and critical theory that served as beacon lights to the younger generation of poets. But it is his emphasis on tradition that is evoking violent protests even from his followers and pushing him almost into a minority of one.

Stephen Spender, for instance, a modern poet-critic, tries in his book, *Destructive Element*, to show up the anomaly of Eliot's position. He quotes the distinguished critic I. A. Richards to support his view that the true Eliot is the Eliot of 'The Waste Land', 'The Hollow Men'—where he appears as a poet who has taken his plunge in the destructive element. Immersion in this destructive element is, according to Spender, the only reliable test of modern literature and his thesis is to prove the descent of this trait from Henry James in a line of literary succession to the present day. So one sees how he discovers in Eliot's traditionalism only an 'elaborate way of bolstering up personal dislikes and prejudices' and also of camouflaging the traces of his latter-day poetic retreat into the shelter of Anglicanism.

But he rightly points out that Eliot's use of the word is vague and ambiguous, even dangerous, although he himself does not offer an elucidation. Although he wilfully misunderstands Eliot's distinction between the classic poet who depends on tradition and the mere poet of genius who does not, and makes the latter responsible for an opinion which he does not hold, an opinion that tradition must be the *sine qua non* of all poetry, yet he raises a pertinent point when he points out, that, if the quality of a poetry at all depends on the tradition on which

it is based, then the comparative merit of poets would depend on their higher or lower degree of traditionalism, which is absurd and meaningless. Meaningless, because, in his opinion, it is a criterion that cannot be applied ; the degree of one's traditionalism can never be assessed. This point indeed may be disputed. But one feels that unless the word tradition is made much clearer, a statement like the following, quoted from Eliot, is bound to be assailed with a series of questions :—

“The mark of a mature poet is that he”, says Eliot, “not merely restores a tradition which has been in abeyance, but in his poetry re-twines as many straying strands of tradition as possible.” One would ask what kind of traditions are these ? Would any of the different classes of tradition mentioned earlier serve the purpose of a mature poet ? If of two poets of equal merit, one chooses a comparatively minor tradition, what would be the result ? Is it possible for a poet of genius, or for that matter for any person of average sensitiveness, to live without a degree of awareness of at least some of the traditions current among his people ? Then why the distinction between a poet with tradition and a poet without any ? And lastly, what would be the proof and measurement of a poet's traditionalism ? —his popularity ?

Eliot, realising his weak position, offered this clarification in *After Strange Gods* :—“What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood-kinship of the same people living in the same place . . . . The population should be homogeneous ; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to become fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate.”

One sees in this not only an awareness of the multiplicity of traditions that can be classified in the manner indicated before, but also a nebulous but strong apprehension of the existence of a more permanent and comprehensive variety of tradition which he

can neither isolate nor name. Hence, inspite of this statement, the questions asked remain unanswered.

Finally, Eliot has to take shelter under other expressions, like 'historic sense', 'sense of the time'. A long passage is worth quoting in this connection. 'Tradition' still puts in a bashful appearance, ready to go, but hardly knowing how to make an honourable exit.

'Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, 'tradition' should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand ; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to any one who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year ; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence ; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.'

## 3

Gilbert Murray shows a clearer perception of that variety of tradition which Eliot fails to isolate. In *'Religio Grammatici'*, he tries to prove that 'The civilisation of the Western world is a unity of descent and brotherhood,' meaning that all the great traditions of Europe, however remote from one another in point



of time or distance, are inter-connected. And yet he has to admit the existence in England of a kind of tradition persisting from times immemorial, independent of and unaffected by anything. 'Let us admit freely', he says, 'that there must of necessity be in all English literature a strain of what one may call vernacular English thought, and that some currents of it, currents of great beauty and freshness, would hardly have been different if all Romance literature had been a sealed book to our tradition.'

And if one but extends the range of vision beyond the limits of a particular country, one would have to admit freely in a similar manner that certain patterns of thought and feeling are recognisable behind all human civilisations, cultures and cults ; patterns that are permanent and universal ; patterns that appear to be related among themselves in some manner, that suggest by their connectedness a continuity, a tradition of the human race as a whole.

Now, in order to get the whole position clear, let us start from another angle of vision. What, then, are the essential characteristics of a tradition ? How does a tradition originate ? How far and in what manner should poetry utilise tradition and which type or types of tradition should it value more than the others.

Seeing that even a legislature, an educational institution or a business organisation claims to have some traditions of its own, it is necessary to restrict the use of the term if it is to serve any useful purpose in critical writing. To use 'traditional' as a term of opprobrium in describing a poet who merely imitates his immediate literary ancestors should be discouraged. It should not be used merely to imply the continued existence of any mood or manner. Whatever may be the limitations of place and time, a tradition must represent the whole life of a group of people, an entire outlook upon life and not merely an agglomeration of fashions and prejudices, beliefs and sentiments, or even of thought-systems and sets of principles unless they have been lived and assimilated into a general attitude.

The essential characteristics of a tradition would therefore include, first of course its continuity and then its range of significance, its reference not to any isolated types of reactions—intellectual, moral, cultural, religious, political etc.—but to those common reaction patterns in every plane of the lives of the people concerned, that indicate a general plan, a common inspiration,—that is recognised to have been responsible for the formation of the group and also its cohesiveness.

On accepting this view of the essential nature of traditions, the possibility of classifying them still remains. Because it will be seen that any tradition—cultural, moral or religious—to be worth its name and recognised as a major tradition—must go beyond the culture, the ethics, the creed or the philosophy and embrace the entire life with which it is connected. Viashnavism in India, for instance, may have owed its origin to a religious inspiration and we may agree to call it a tradition—mainly religious. But we see the central core of religious impulse spreads itself out in all directions giving a uniqueness to the Vaishnavas in their very approach to life, a uniqueness that sought expression not only in religious practice, but in literature and culture. The surest test of a living tradition is that it overflows the banks of its original bed and inundates the whole extent of the life in which it is born.

A religious faith, an ethical principle, a particular principle of conduct, an intellectual system—any one of these may start a tradition ; but none of these can become one unless it has been lived, unless it has struck its roots in the head and heart, in the imagination and instinct of a group of men. And this exactly is what makes it so important to poets, who are dealers in life, if that phrase can be excused. In traditions, they find life revealed, crystallised ; outside traditions they meet with life in the amorphous state. From his own personal experience, a mature poet learns how to value beliefs more than notions, understanding more than fancy, belief of many more than belief of one, faith of long duration more than a belief of a shorter duration.

If one remembers that this is not an advocacy of conservatism or a denial of original poetic vision, but only the analysis of a poet's source of strength—an elucidation of the circumstances that are favourable to the growth of a poetic talent, one would perhaps be ready to agree with Eliot that genius in order that it may fully realise itself, needs something more than its intrinsic strength—the happy circumstance of a congenial tradition ready at hand.

## 4

Now, I think, it would be easier to understand how historical sense, awareness of the times and tradition are inter-related.

Awareness of the times, which has been the common cry of all poets who have called themselves modern since before the last world war, has been with some at least, merely a notion that the world is disintegrating, that there is nothing to live for, and nothing for it but to take a plunge in the destructive element. We admit that an acute sense of dire events, of the desperateness of man's present predicament, should feature very largely in any appraisal of our times. But taken by itself, does not this concentrated, unrelieved bitterness, this deliberate wallowing in misery, show rather a personal bias and a lack of the historical sense which Eliot believes to be indispensable for understanding one's place in time? If a man's house is on fire, it may be quite natural for him to behave like a raving maniac. But his mental reactions at that moment are more or less on a behaviouristic, stimulus-response plane and can hardly be called an awareness of his position, which would indeed come much later. The difference between the emotion of a wounded animal and a feeling of tragedy, in the Aristotelian sense, has not been very clear to this section of poets.

There are some, of course, who have had more success and influence, who are not without this historical sense. If we go back for a moment to the passage from Eliot quoted last, we

shall see that this historical sense for him is no other than what we have described as the large tradition of the human race.

Some again mean by this awareness of the times, only an intimate knowledge of the various problems of modern life—political, economic, social, moral ;—a cognizance of different points of view, of conflicting motives and interest, of strings and pulleys behind the puppet show of visible incident. This indeed presupposes a knowledge of the historical development of notions and institutions, but not necessarily a historical sense, which is more than knowledge, an intuitive perception.

Some believe that an awareness of the times is practically helpful to an artist in his artistic practice. This means an awareness of the way in which the minds of one's contemporaries work, so that this awareness amounts to something like an actor's or a speaker's sense of audience. It cannot be denied that an awareness in this sense is an equipment that enables an artist to adjust his technique of expression in such a manner that he may reach a wide public. But even this type of awareness cannot be effective for any length of time unless it is supported by historical sense. A speaker arriving at a late hour to speak before a gathering, is bound to be puzzled, unless, of course, he proposes to deliver a set speech. He may have a sense of audience in the sense that he has a general acquaintance with the ways in which the mind of the people works. But not having a knowledge of the past proceedings of the meeting and the sequence of the people's mental reactions, he cannot be expected to know their exact mental attitude at the moment when he rises to speak. This, certainly, would place him under a great disadvantage.

Vernacular tradition or home-tradition is closely allied with this historical sense, this grasp of the vast background of the life of Man, the only difference being that the former is restricted within the limits of one place. A man born with a poet's sensibility, cannot fail, in the process of his living among men, to imbibe both kinds of tradition in a higher or lower degree. Historical

sense must indeed depend on a mental power, a stronger power of mental vision than ordinary, a sufficient proportion of which must come to a poet as an inborn endowment. It can be educated and refined by labour but cannot be 'obtained by great labour', as Eliot loosely remarks, thereby getting himself entangled in hopeless self-contradiction. If we agree about the meaning of historical sense as described, we must admit that all true poets must have it in a sufficient proportion as endowment. If we now accept Eliot's statement that 'This historical sense is what makes a poet traditional', the logical conclusion would be, that, in that case, all true poets, are traditional. How can then Blake cease to be traditional after his 25th year and Shelley retain the distinction of being a poet of genius but fail to be traditional and hence a classic like Dante ?

The matter is that Eliot is here referring to another kind of tradition, the only kind, indeed, to which the use of the word tradition should be restricted, if it is to be rescued from its hopeless ambiguity. It is that kind of tradition, already described, which may originate from a particular thought-sequence or an emotional attitude, but which finally involves the whole of the life that comes under its influence and fixes in it definite patterns of response and heaves it up, as it were, into a peak of self-expression. A poet who is born at the opportune moment of the upward surge of a tradition feels the upthrust, a strength more than his own. A poet who finds himself between two waves appears to be beating ineffectual wings in the void in vain. A poet who is born in steadier times, when neither an upheaval nor a decadence is apparent, looks for strength and support in a long-past tradition, or even in several in which he recognises some affinity with his own experience. If he can find no tradition that suits him, he can still write good poetry, but a poetry of only restricted appeal and significance.

One aspect of the mystery of the making of poetry seems then, to be this. An effective degree of historical sense and awareness of the times must be there, in every case. But

although these two things are interdependent, a particular poet or a particular generation of poets may have them in varying proportions. That is why at times historical sense tends to become lazily self-sufficient and hazy, and ceases to ratify and refine itself by a close contact with fact ; and again at times contemporaneity tends towards merely a smart unimaginative matter-of-factness, an over-emphasis of affairs and facts of the day, on the newspaper variety of reality. When, however, a poet combines both in a happy proportion, he begins to write significant poetry. But if he is to rise to the stature of greatness and universal significance, he must utilise the impulse of a tradition in its restricted sense. If it is the tradition of his own times, he will use it as a contrast to some defect or as an impetus to some potentiality in his own age. Mere reliving in a past tradition is certainly reactionary ; harmful and characteristic of a weak talent. Seizing the whole core of energy at the heart of the tradition that he chooses as his own, a great poet must act and fight in the living present ; bursting open all locked doors of mystery, subduing all obstinate anomalies and contradictions, lashing into wakefulness all doped confusion, he must create, or make for, a new mental order.

## THREE POEMS

By Michael Madhusudan Dutt

( *Translated from the original Bengali by Somnath Maitra.*

*These translations, we are sure, will greatly interest  
our Non-Bengali readers.—Ed. )*

The first great name in modern Bengali poetry is that of Michael Madhusudan Dutt ( 1824-1873 ). He was a brilliant student of the Hindu College in Calcutta in its early days, and while yet a student he embraced Christianity. In education, outlook, and even in his mode of living he had already become westernized ; and this conversion served to estrange him completely from his people. Ever afterwards, he lived an alien in his own land. The life of his contemporaries repelled him ; he found in it only low aims and suspiciousness, and the jealous guarding of petty interests. The Bengali literature of his day moved him to contempt and derision ; he found in the narrowness of its scope, in its preoccupation with the obvious and the trivial, and in its relish for indecency, a reflection of the mean and degenerate life around him. And because he had not the fortune in his formative years to realize the beauty and majesty of Sanskrit literature and the undying greatness of the ancient Indian culture, he turned with all the fervour of his soul to English and classical European literature for intellectual sustenance and poetic inspiration. He wrote poetry in English at first, because he had

not cultivated his mother-tongue and because he thought he knew English well ; and he produced in his *Captive Lady* and other English pieces poetry that was facile, derivative and wholly undistinguished. And then something happened. Some instinct within him told him there was truth in the criticism that had so angered him at first, the criticism of his English poems as, at best, imitative. He began to dream now of the achievement of something great in the language of his fathers, which he set himself to master with an industry that was remarkable. And now followed a period of amazing productivity ; between 1859 and 1862, Michael wrote in Bengali three full-scale prose dramas, two farces, a number of short poems including sonnets which he was the first to write in Bengali, and two epics in blank verse, one of which—*Meghnadbadhkavya*—is regarded as his masterpiece and is certainly the greatest Bengali epic of modern times. It was a *tour de force* in a form of verse unattempted by any poet in Bengal before Michael.

—*Translator's note.*



## TO BENGAL.\*

REMEMBER me, thy servant, Mother, this is my prayer  
to thee.

If in seeking my heart's desire, I err or go astray,  
Make not the lotus of thy heart, O Mother, honeyless.  
If through adverse fate life's star falls out of this body's  
sky,

I shall have no regret.

He that is born shall die, who e'er 'scaped death ?  
Where, in the current of Life, is the drop that is still ?  
But if thou rememberest me, I fear not death.  
Not even the fly is lost that falls into the nectar-pool.  
Blessed above all men is he whom none forget,  
Whom in their mind's temple men worship for evermore.  
But O my green Motherland ! what grace have I, what  
virtue,

That I might ask of thee,  
Such immortality ?

If out of love thou rememberest only what was good in me,  
And forgettest what was evil,  
If, O giver of precious gifts, thou blessest thy servant  
with immortality,

Then would I blossom in the waters of remembrance,  
Mother,

As the honeyed lotus in the waters of *Manas*,  
Be it spring, be it autumn.

\* The poem, his best known lyric, was written by Michael on the eve of his departure for England in 1862—*Ed.*

## LAMENT.\*

BEGUILED by hope, what have I gained ?

I ask myself.

Life's current flows on towards the sea of Death,

How can I turn it back ?

Day by day, the sands of life run out, my strength  
grows feebler

Day by day,

Yet, even yet, ah me, I am drunk with hope !

Ah, soul in thrall, when, will the dark night end ?

When shalt thou wake ?

How long in life's garden shall Youth bloom

Nor lose its hue ?

The dewdrop on the blade of grass shines not far aye,

Who knows not that each bubble is doomed to burst ?

What is his bliss, who dreams of happiness ?

He wakes only to cry !

The lighting flash but dazzles the passer-by

And makes night's gloom yet deeper.

The mirage in desert wastes doth kill of thirst ;

Thus cheats false Hope.

The first three stanzas of a poem entitled *Bilap*.—*Ed.*

KAPOTKSHA.\*

EVER art thou in my thoughts, O stream,  
In my loneliness, I think always of thee,  
Always, as men in dreams hear magic melodies,  
With thy murmur do I soothe my ears in fancy.  
Wandering in many lands, have I seen many a stream,  
But in whose waters may I slake my thirst for love,  
As in thine, O fount of milk in my motherland's breasts ?  
Shall I see thee once more ? As long as thou  
Shalt flow, paying thy tribute of waters to thy king,  
the sea,

This, to thee, is my prayer :  
Ever to the ears of Bengal's sons, dear friend,  
Sing his name, who, exiled in strange lands,  
Takes lovingly thy name in Bengal's strains.

\* A sonnet written in Europe celebrating a small river in his native village by whose banks he had spent his childhood days—*Ed.*

## REVIEWS

**SRI AUROBINDO MANDIR : Second Annual ( Published by the  
Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, 15, College Square, Calcutta ).**

WE welcome this second Annual published on the auspicious occasion of the 71st Birthday of the renowned saint of Pondicherry, and our hearty thanks are due to the Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, for bringing out the present volume on the teachings of the Master, on his Philosophy and Religion. The expectations that were aroused by the contributions in the First Annual published on the occasion of the previous birthday have been properly fulfilled by the learned essays in the present one.

There are so many aspects of the thought and writings of the great Philosopher of the day, that the two Annuals hitherto presented in print to the interested readers of the profound thinker, can hardly be regarded as adequate to do full justice to the teachings offered in his different works, not to speak of that which culminates them all, namely, the *Life Divine*, which is by itself an incomparable work in depth and width of thought. It is hoped in earnest that the *Pathamandir* will be continuing this admirable undertaking annually by such publications in the same series on the future occasions of the birthday of the living saint and philosopher of this land. In the present circumstances of the day which darken the mind and spirit of the so-called 'civilised' people, it is felt to be absolutely necessary to place before them something of such value as will keep alive the inborn but dying spiritual aspirations of man. The contributions of the kind hitherto presented in the Annuals for the unsophisticated public might, it is hoped, serve one much-needed purpose, at least under the hopeless materialistic tendencies of the age. If it succeeds in rendering this service even partially, it will no doubt have achieved a great end.

Only one thing has specially to be kept in mind by the learned contributors to the future annuals in the series that their writings should confine themselves strictly to the actual teachings of the great master and not mix up with them their own ideas and interpretations derived from foreign sources. For in going carefully through the contributions hitherto made one cannot honestly say that they are entirely free from such mixture or rather confusion. This is no wonder, when we consider that the intricate writings of the Master are not so clear everywhere, except perhaps to those who have made a wider and deeper study of the profound thought. This is only by way of a suggestion for future caution. It does not reflect any slur on the

contributors who appear to have all honestly presented what they have done according to their personal impressions and in the light of their own understanding.

It is almost impossible for the reviewer to treat of the merits of the varied contributions made by the learned writers for the volume, dealing as they do mainly with the theoretical aspects of the Master's teachings. Reading them one is apt to miss, as the present reviewer does, the nature of life one should have to live in order to follow up the Ideal the Master offers. This omission, it is hoped, will be made up in the future volumes of the series by contributions regarding the lines one should adopt for the realisation of the Ideal in one's practical life. This sort of contribution is, of course, possible only for those who are actually living the life of the Asrama founded by the great Rishi of the day. For a mystery surrounds the inner life of the Asrama and its devoted inmates, for men like us who are outside the 'sacred' precincts of the silent place.

P. B. Adhikari.

### *A BOOK OF RUSSIAN VERSE*

Edited by C. M. Bowra.

( Macmillan and Co. )

TRANSLATIONS are a necessity and as such are to be welcomed, but it is seldom easy to feel any real enthusiasm over them, particularly where poetry is concerned. There have of course been exceptional cases, such as Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, but generally speaking a verse translation is a poor substitute for the original, for even the most gifted translator works under a serious handicap. The writer of an original poem has a free hand. If he finds, for instance, that the words at his disposal are inadequate to express his meaning as he wishes it expressed, he may change the thought a little and so escape the verbal difficulty. Such a modification is fair enough, since nothing is worth saying in poetry unless it can be said well. But for the translator everything is prescribed—sense, wording, metre and rhyme; and any departure from these confines is made at his own risk. Yet departures are inevitable. Foreign metres are not always suited to English and their retention may produce an awkward effect, giving a false impression of the original. Or, if the form of wording is strictly adhered to, metre and rhyme are sure to be sacrificed, and in any case the translation from one language to another generally entails some loss of charm which can only be made good by the translator's supplying something of his own. It therefore

rests with him to decide which liberties he will take, conscious that whatever course he chooses he will play into the hands of critics.

*A Book of Russian Verse* is a fine illustration of what can be achieved in the face of these difficulties. It contains a representative selection of short Russian poems in translation, a hundred and fiftysix in all, including thirtyfour by Pushkin and twentytwo by Lermontov. The editor himself has borne the brunt of the work, having translated eightyfour pieces. Apart from eleven anonymous versions, the remainder are from the pens of a dozen translators, the list being headed by Hon M. Baring with twelve to his credit, while R. M. Hewitt, V. de S. Pinto, and J. S. Phillimore are bracketed next with nine. The reader should find plenty here to convince him that Russian poetry deserves attention. Let him whet his appetite on Dr. Bowra's stimulating introduction and then proceed to the poems themselves. The selection covers a wide range and shows up well the background of life from which the poetry has sprung. Winter, sleigh bells, the open steppes, toil, hunger, exile, heart-searching, patriotism and love are all here, and at the end comes Mayakovsky with something of the new Russia :

Tramp squares with rebellious treading !  
Up heads ! As proud peaks be seen !  
In the second flood we are spreading !  
Every city on earth will be clean.

The general level of the work is remarkably high. To judge from a comparison with some forty of the originals, which marks the limit of my knowledge, the translations are as faithful as we have any right to expect, the editor himself being perhaps the most scrupulous. But there is much more here than mere literal fidelity, and some of the pieces seem about as well rendered into English as they could be. It is gratifying to find, as one looks for one's favourites, that they have fallen into trusty hands. "I loved you once" for example, and "Day's rain is done" strike me as first class versions of two of Pushkin's finest ; and his incomparable verses to A. P. Kern, whom, alas, he later called a Babylonian harlot, have also been done with real feeling despite the slight awkwardness of the words 'transitory' and 'immaculate'. The value of preserving the original metre is nowhere perhaps more apparent than in the wild night scene of "Devils" :

Storm-clouds whirl and storm-clouds scurry ;  
From behind them pale moonlight  
Flickers where the snowflakes hurry.  
Dark the sky, and dark the night.

These we owe to the editor as well as other excellent renderings, among which is Lermontov's "Cossack Cradle Song." Others which seem

to me to stand out are Khomyakov's "Labourer" by Sir Bernard Pares, J. S. Phillimore's version of "My Country" and Hon M. Baring's "The Testament", both by Lermontov. O. Elton has done the best translation I have seen of Tatyana's letter from Pushkin's "Evgeny Onegin", but I doubt if the direct simplicity of this masterpiece can ever quite be captured in English. "Whispering. A timid sigh" is a graceful presentation by R. M. Hewitt of Fet's little poem, though one misses something which comes from a total absence of verbs in the Russian and the exultant cry of 'dawn, dawn !' in the last line.

In work of this kind a slip here and there is always a possibility. It looks, for instance, as though in one line 'gives water to' has been mistaken for 'sings', the words being rather alike, and in another 'to boil' has perhaps been confused with 'to hover', the only difference in Russian being one of stress. But even if these suspicions are justified, they need not shake our confidence, in spite of the editor's own modest protests, in the scholarship which has gone to make the book. The resemblance between Russian poetry and Greek at once strikes those who have studied both ; so it is perhaps not surprising that of the five leading contributors at least three are Greek scholars. The translations should fulfil a double function, helping to console some for their ignorance of Russian and tempting others to broach the originals. Dr. Bowra deserves the thanks of all who care for such things. If only there were more anthologies like this !

John O. Burt.

*TO-MORROW IS OURS : A NOVEL OF THE INDIA OF TODAY*

By K. Ahmad Abbas. Published by Popular Book Depot,  
( Bombay 1943 ). Price Rs. 4/8/-.

AS the subtitle of the book suggests it is a novel dealing with the present-day India—struggling with political and social hurdles. The writer, who has already made a name as a brilliant journalist and critic, belongs to that generation of young Indian writers who have been burning with a new consciousness of freedom and progress for a long time past. These young Indians are painfully aware of the fact that India is to be made free not only from the foreign yoke but also and, more urgently so, from the yoke of a decadent culture that is eating into the very vitals of the Indian people.

Srikant, the young doctor, and Parvati, his wife, represent this young India—striving to keep at bay the external enemy in the guise of the foreign

government and also the internal antagonists in the innumerable social superstitions and obsessions blinding the Indian people. Parvati, who stands for the new Indian womanhood, is the central figure around which the story develops. A student of the medical college at Lahore, she is a free and fiery spirit moving about with sure steps and a fund of inexhaustive energy. She is born of an unconventional intercaste marriage and thus inherits a love for freedom which makes her life a constant challenge to the orthodox, the philistine, and the reactionaries. On the death of her mother she finds herself alone in the wide world, but she does not lose heart. She starts life on her own account. After a series of sordid experiences with people like her own maternal uncle, a lascivious Rai Bahadur, the Secretary of the school where she applied for the post of a teacher, she joins a Dance Troupe as a dancer. Finally, she meets Srikant, a handsome doctor at Bombay, where her party was giving demonstrations. And as could be expected, Srikant falls an easy victim to her seductive charms.

Now comes the real problem. Young Srikant is modern in the fullest sense of the term. He possesses a remarkably unbiassed mind, free from all petty prejudices and cold conservatism. He is back from his studies in the continent and has not missed the real implications of Western education. But he comes from a thoroughly decadent Zamindar family of Eastern U. P. where his aged mother jealously guards the feudal interests of her family and who, quite naturally, opposes her son and daughter-in-law inspired with the radical ideology of a new social pattern.

In the end it is seen that the old and superannuated social order has of necessity to pay homage to the new order. The picture of the sharp conflict has been painted with much insight and conviction. The story never for a second lacks interest and the reader is carried from page to page with an unstudied ease of style. But inspite of all these excellences the novel does not rise above the ordinary. It lacks a certain amount of integrity and detail that a good novel should have. It is written in a vein more of a film ; journalese too has taken away much of the sincerity of the writer. Nevertheless it is quite an ambitious and promising book.

Subhas Sen



**THE IVORY TOWER : By S. R. Dongherkery.**

Published by East and West Book House, Baroda,

Price—Rs 2/-.

A collection of poems composed in "moments snatched from a busy life of official routine from which they afforded a temporary escape." The author, who is the Registrar of the Bombay University, has admitted this at the conclusion of the 'preface' to his book of poems. Throughout the book, the poems impress themselves on us as written rather to 'pass the idle hour' or to 'seek a refuge from a busy life' rather than to express genuine poetic inspiration. The book is divided into three parts—Love, Beauty & Truth. The first two subdivisions are characterised by a neatness of rhyme and a self-conscious lightness of touch. It is disappointing to note that instead of enhancing the beauty of the poems by the insertion of the 'personal factor', the author's overwhelming sense of conjugal devotion has rather marred the effectiveness of the poems in this group. The third group—Truth—is more impressive, in spite of the inane sentimentality of "Ring the Temple Bells" and "The Real India." "On seeing an Image of Buddha", "To the Trimurti" and "The Garden of Brindavan." are the best pieces in the book, inspired by genuine emotion and feeling.

Najoo F. Billimoria.

**CITIZEN TOM PAINE : By Howard Fast. Limited Abridged Edition.**

Published by International Book House, Ltd. Bombay, India.

Price—Rs. 3/-.

THIS is an abridged edition of one of the best-sellers in America in 1943. Being an abridged version, it suffers from the defect of sounding too sketchy and fragmentary in parts. Nevertheless, it is a fine biographical novel of the life of Thomas Paine, one of the heroes of modern life. Born an Englishman, but with the 'rugged individualism' and the 'home-spun' qualities of the pioneer American, he found fame and later notoriety also in the States. Thomas Paine was the typical example of the great man who is hailed as hero by the mob and also treated by the same mob as the worst criminal in society. But throughout the persecution and the glory the spirit of the man remained the same and his faith in the Truth remained as unshakable as ever. Although Paine's is not a spectacular figure on the pages of history, it is to his idealism and also to his 'common sense' that the United States of to-day owes her freedom and her ideals of democracy.

Najoo F. Billimoria.

*ŚRĪ PĀNCARĀTRA RAKṢĀ OF ŚRĪ VEDĀNTA DEŚĪKA :*

Edited by Pandit Duraiswami Aiyangar and Pandit

Venugopalacharya. Published from the Adyar

Library, Price—Rs. 4-8-0.

WHEREAS in the Tantra literature Śiva is most frequently the speaker, Nārāyaṇa himself is mostly made the speaker in the Pāñcarātra literature. In India, the sect that follows the Pāñcarātra creed holds a position of considerable importance. It possesses numerous books of its own, of which only a few have been printed. In the book under review, the Pāñcarātra Siddhanta has been compiled from different books. Sri Nigamanta Deśika, the compiler, is well-known as an authority on this school of philosophy. Hence, this book will be particularly helpful to one who wants to get an access to the entire Pāñcarātra creed in its true form, within a short compass.

The preface written by Srinivasa Murti, the Librarian of the Adyar Library, is full of useful information. The index, appended at the end, of books held to be authoritative, of names of authors, and of slokas, will also be found very useful by the readers. The paper and printing are excellent. It is hoped that people who are curious to know the Pāñcarātra creed will find a study of this book highly profitable.

Nityanandavinode Goswami.

*SPINOZIAN WISDOM OR NATURAL RELIGION :*

By James Arther (The Adyar Library, 1943).

IN this little volume James Arther has endeavoured to introduce anew Spinoza's philosophy to the suffering humanity. Though written mainly for Theosophical readers, the author thinks that the truths of the book, if rightly realised, will bring permanent peace and happiness to all mankind. He is a devotee of Spinoza and as such his delineation of Spinoza's philosophical or ethical views cannot be critical. On the contrary it is suffused with reverence and love for the great thinker. The author is on the whole correct when he maintains :

"The identification of God and Nature, in its all-embracing sense, the realization that everything is rooted in that same Nature or God, the recognition in everything of an aspect of eternity, the absolute parallelism of mind and body, the declaration of understanding and ( or ) intuition as the highway and most perfect means of truth, the demonstration that the good of one is the good of all, and that one's love for anything or everything

is but Nature's or God's love for the whole and every part of the universe—these are a few of Spinoza's imperishable contributions to the human palace of wisdom."

All through the book he lays great emphasis on Spinoza's famous identification of God with Nature in the *Ethica*: "That eternal and infinite Being which we call God or Nature." With great skill he draws the implications of this act of identification and suggests that in it lies the panacea of all evils.

The get-up of the book is excellent.

Benoy G. Ray

*MUSLIM POLITICS* : By Humayun Kabir

Publishers : Gupta Rahaman & Co., Calcutta, 1943. Price Re. 1/-.

It is a collection of a few articles written in a very convincing manner and with refreshing candour in an effort to put in a nut-shell the genesis and growth of political-mindedness among the Muslims during the last three decades and a half in this country. Mr. Kabir leads one through this labyrinthine maze as one who knows the way and has gone to no small pains to find it. He is particularly interesting where he mercilessly exposes the hollowness of the pretensions of the Muslim League and tears off the mask under which it masquerades as the mouthpiece of the Muslim masses in India. He is no less ruthless where he traces the emergence and sinister implications of the leadership of Mr. Jinnah whose enigmatic and elusive personality has unfortunately proved so baffling to the cause of a genuine rapprochement between the two major contending communities in the country. Mr. Kabir has made a distinctly valuable contribution to our political literature and it is very gratifying to note that his reputation as a thoughtful and straightforward writer endowed with a keen and penetrative mind is herein so well-sustained. Mr. Kabir has provided Hindus and Muslims alike with much food for thought and let us hope that the seeds of his sowing are not wasted upon any barren soil.

A. K. C.

**BEHIND THE MUD WALL : By Freda Bedi**

Published by the Unity Publishers, Lahore. Price—Rs. 5/-.

IT is a collection of a few scintillating cameos culled by the Authoress herself from her life, rich in experiences, oftener than not, of a most bizarre kind for one of her birth, upbringing and education. For, Freda Bedi is an English woman whom an essentially English seat of learning had fashioned for the life of, her kind but meant by the Fates to play the role of an Indian wife, ensconced in the very bosom of an orthodox household. With her, "Thy people shall be my people," aptly chosen by her to be the caption of the opening article in the book under review, is no mere idle quotation, devoid of any special significance. On the other hand, when she employs it, she is not merely meaning it but actually living it over in her personal life, in a spirit of sheer abandon which is the aroma that pervades the atmosphere of the book from cover to cover. Indeed, few foreigners that we know of could have run the whole gamut of Indian life, from the zenana to the jail, with her gusto and relish. The variety of subjects covered in the book, far from taking away from its value or charm only serves to heighten them both ; for one thing, it shows the range of her experiences and then it chronicles how a highly refined and sensitive temperament reacted to them under varying circumstances and ordeals.

The book is a study in the vivid style of writing as much as of the colourful personality of the writer and is thus a source of double interest to the reader. For our part, we also like to take it "as seed for a harvest yet to come" — a promise hailed with delight as full of possibilities for our belles-lettres in English.

We must be permitted to point out, however, that the book is rather prohibitively priced for a publication meant to be popular and deserving to be so.

A. K. C.

**"WITH NO REGRETS" : By Krishna Hutheesing.**

Padma Publications Ltd. Bombay Price-6/8.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S *Autobiography* has long been a text book to the student of modern India, not only in this country but in Britain and America. Mrs. Hutheesing's autobiography is by comparison slight. In it

are neither striking political revelations nor the paradoxical indignities to which the professional journalist loves to subject the great. It is just a glass, quiet but invaluable. For the history of the India and *With No Regrets* will remain of the same deep interest and delight to the student of the Indian Nationalist Movement as is Roper's *Life of More* to the student of the English Reformation.

Krishna Hutheesing makes no effort to force these memories. Therein lies their value. No mere historian or journalist could make Motilal Nehru stand out as grandly in his public life as he does here in private.

"Once father was going to London alone and the rest of us were staying on in Paris. He asked me what I would like from London and I told him I had wanted a short leather coat for a very long time . . . Father promised to get it for me but forgot to take my size. When he reached London he went to Selfridge's one day and demanded to see the manager. The manager came and father quite calmly told him that he wanted to buy a leather coat for his daughter. As he did not know the exact size, could the manager kindly arrange to have a few shop girls lined up, about 5 ft. 2 ins. tall, so that they could try on the coat and then father could judge whether it would fit me or not . . . Jawahar was furious. He thought it was very wrong of father to have done such a thing just because he knew he could get away with it."

Motilal secretly lying on the bedroom floor to test its hardness when Jawaharlal was to go to jail for the first time : Motilal achieving the impossible feat of a hot bath in a Russian hotel : most vivid of all, Motilal at the age of sixty laying up his carriage and horses and putting on khadi.

Yet inevitably it is not Motilal but Jawaharlal who is the central figure of the story. Dynamic always, sometimes a little impatient, even stern, as in his attempts to teach Krishna mathematics and skiing.

"About a week after my arrival in Switzerland, Jawahar presented me with a map of Geneva and an English-French dictionary as well as a book containing bus and tram tickets. I was told that that was all I required to get along by myself and the sooner I started doing things on my own the better it would be for me . . . As Kamala was unwell I should have to do the housekeeping."

The book would be worth reading simply for Jawaharlal's letters from jail, powerful, restrained, sometimes visionary, sometimes wistful, sometimes humorous, but never bitter. Two brief extracts may be given.

"J'y suis ; j'y reste. I shall read a lot, for indeed there is little else to do—just to read and to think and go through the day's routine. So when I come out, and that is a long way off, I may be a little wiser than I am, perhaps not. Wisdom is a very elusive thing and difficult to sieze."

"It has recently occurred to me that the British Government by issuing an order under Sec. 144 on me and by subsequently arresting me on the 19th October forgot a most important event on that day—and the beautiful and artistic gift that I should have made to my dearly beloved sister, did not materialise—this lapse on my part was most unfortunate. But I hasten to correct it. Wherefore, take yourself to a book-shop and choose some volumes containing the wisdom of the ancients, and the faith of the middle ages and the scepticism of the present and the glimpses of the glory that is to be—and take them and pay for them and consider them the belated, but loving gift of a somewhat absent-minded brother who thinks often of his little sister. And read those chosen volumes and out of them construct a magic city, full of dreams, castles and flowering gardens and running brooks, where beauty and happiness dwell and the ills that this sorry world of ours suffers from can gain no admittance—and life will then become one long and happy endeavour, a ceaseless adventure to build this city of magic and drive away all the ugliness and misery around us."

I have said that this book has a lasting value for the student of Indian affairs. Perhaps its contemporary value is even greater. Since the Autumn of 1942 the political life of India has been stultified and bitter. For eighteen months there has been little on the political stage but recriminations over events whose every aspect has now been thrashed threadbare. But for Mrs. Hutheesing there is no bitterness. She looks back with no regrets on twenty years of constant anxiety and suffering: of jailings and lathi charges: of wives and mothers growing old with worry and dying before their time. She looks forward with complete confidence to the triumph of the ideal for which her family has suffered these things. And the quiet expression of that confidence gives a dignity to her cause, lifting it plainly above the level of political manoeuvring where in barren times it sometimes seems to rest.

Richard Symonds.

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